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First Committee
15th meeting
Friday, 26 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Reyes (Colombia) (spoke in Spanish): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of Japan, South Africa and Colombia, draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects".

It is not my intention to describe, in this brief statement, the devastating effect that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has on the life and well-being of our peoples, on the progress and development of our nations and on international peace and security. The mere fact that small arms and light weapons cause the death of 400,000 people every year gives us some idea of the seriousness of this phenomenon.

After a long process during which it became aware of and began to examine this issue, the international community decided to convene, in July this year, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That Conference adopted, by consensus, a Programme of Action that embodies the political commitment of States to deal with that problem. It includes comprehensive and concrete measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate illegal activities related to small arms and light weapons, as well as provision for a follow-up mechanism. The Conference represented the beginning of an important process to deal with the diverse and complex elements of this phenomenon.

Given this context, the delegations of Japan, South Africa and Colombia have been working with other delegations in preparing the draft resolution that we now present to the First Committee for its consideration. In the preambular part, the draft resolution recalls all of the resolutions and decisions on this issue adopted by the General Assembly in previous sessions and welcomes the consensus adoption of the Programme of Action at the Conference.

In its operative part, the draft resolution refers to measures relating to the follow-up to the Conference, including a decision to convene a conference, no later than 2006, to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, and to convene a meeting of States on a biennial basis, commencing in 2003, to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action. It also includes a request to the Secretary-General to undertake a United Nations study, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts, to examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons.

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The draft resolution also calls upon all States to implement the Programme of Action and encourages the United Nations, other international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to undertake initiatives to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. It also encourages States to take appropriate national measures to destroy surplus, confiscated or collected small arms and light weapons and to submit, on a voluntary basis, information to the Secretary-General on the types and quantities of arms destroyed. It requests the Secretary-General, through the Department for Disarmament Affairs, to collate and circulate data and information provided by States on their implementation of the Programme of Action.

The draft resolution, which at this time is being sponsored by some 70 States, should be adopted by consensus and receive the sponsorship of many more States, because it represents the endorsement of and commitment to the Programme of Action on the part of the General Assembly, the most representative organ of the international community. The draft resolution brings together the commitment of States and that of the Organization in a common task.

We have completed the arduous task of defining concepts and formulating language; we have identified our differences through a long process of debate; we have taken political positions; and, finally, we have identified consensus elements. We have a map and a route. It is now imperative for us to start down the road.

We should not lose either our commitment or our momentum. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to call upon the States represented here to begin to implement the Programme of Action expeditiously. Many concrete actions can be implemented straight away, including undertaking studies to adopt or improve, as the case may be, laws, standards or administrative procedures to ensure effective control over the production, export, import, transport and re-export of small arms and light weapons; as well as the criminalizing of the illicit manufacturing, possession and storage of and trade in small arms and light weapons, so that such activities can be prosecuted; establishing national entities or bodies to coordinate the implementation of the Programme of Action; establishing or specifying national contact centres to enhance cooperation with other States in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

I have mentioned only a few of the agreed actions in the Programme of Action; I could mention many more, such as those described in paragraphs 7, 9, 12, 13, 17 and 21 of section II, which States could begin to implement immediately. These initial steps will generate the necessary energy, impetus and orientation so as to ensure that the most complex and difficult activities can be implemented.

I would also like to recall that international cooperation is a fundamental element of the Programme of Action, and that during the Conference and the preparatory process, various countries offered valuable assistance to countries that had fewer resources or were more severely affected by the problem.

The elements of that cooperation are described in section III of the Programme of Action, and include technical and financial assistance, exchange of information and resources, and capacity-building for nations, institutions and personnel. In this context, I want to stress the importance of assisting countries in defining and designing national programmes that are consistent with the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference. Such cooperation gains even greater political meaning given the current total worth of the global trade in small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the Committee how important it is for all of us to ensure that the Department for Disarmament Affairs has all the political backing and financial resources that it needs in order to fulfil the responsibilities that we have assigned to it.

Coming at the beginning of this century, the dramatic events of last month reaffirm the importance and relevance of disarmament, in particular with regard to small arms and light weapons, which are the terrorist weapons par excellence. This makes even more meaningful and timely the consensus adoption of a Programme of Action at the Conference. But we must bear in mind that, as was recognized at that Conference, we, the States, bear the primary responsibility in this matter.

Mr. Dhanapala (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I have requested the floor to address the Committee in connection with the draft

resolution on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects contained in document A/C.1/56/L.47.

By this draft resolution, the Secretary-General is entrusted with a number of responsibilities. Paragraph 2 calls for providing substantive support to biennial meetings of States to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action. Paragraph 9 calls for ensuring that resources and expertise are made available to the Secretariat to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. Paragraph 10 calls for undertaking a United Nations study on the feasibility of developing an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms an light weapons. Paragraph 12 requests the Secretary-General to collect and circulate data and information provided by States on a voluntary basis, including national reports on the implementation by those States of the Programme of Action.

Given that those are new tasks entrusted to the Secretariat for which no provision has been made under section 4, regarding disarmament, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, a statement by the Secretary-General on financial implications is required and is being provided.

It should be noted that, while disarmament has been identified by the General Assembly in resolution 55/233 as one of the eight priority areas of the Organization, the Department for Disarmament Affairs is in fact the smallest department in the Secretariat, and its share of the total United Nations budget is 0.57 per cent of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. The limited resources of the Department, as reflected in the proposed programme budget, are fully utilized to carry out its mandated activities in the two main areas of concern to the international community, namely, weapons of mass destruction — in particular nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons — and conventional arms, including the current and future challenges posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and practical disarmament measures.

At the same time, new demands on the Department have been generated by a large number of diverse issues brought forth by emerging trends and developments in the field of disarmament and security. Furthermore, the Department needs to respond to the increasing number of requests for assistance in practical disarmament measures received, not only from Albania, but also from Bolivia, Cambodia, Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya and Niger. To meet all these new demands, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has requested a moderate increase in its proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, which is being considered at this moment in the Fifth Committee.

It is clear from the above that, without additional resources, the Department for Disarmament Affairs will not be able to effectively perform the new tasks entrusted to it under the draft resolution in question. In this respect, the financial statement containing proposals for additional resources is currently being prepar d by the Department and will be submitted to this Committee.

I would like to recall that, when introducing the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 in the Fifth Committee, the Secretary-General pointed out that he was proposing a budget totaling $2,519 million, which represents a 0.5 per cent real resource reduction. He noted that his proposals call for small but important increases in certain priority areas that include disarmament. The Secretary-General appealed to Member States to make sure that resources are available for what they consider to be high priority areas. I would like to reiterate the appeal of the Secretary-General and urge the Committee to support the request of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for a moderate increase in resources so as to enable the Department to effectively discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it by Member States in the field of disarmament, one of the priority areas of the Organization.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): I wish to join the Ambassador of Colombia in introducing draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", on behalf of the co-sponsors, presently numbered at 81.

Following the successful conclusion of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, South Africa, Colombia and Japan agreed to jointly submit a draft resolution to the First Committee in order to capture the achievements of the Conference, in particular the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its

Aspects. The draft resolution also consolidates and replaces previous First Committee resolutions on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and on small arms sponsored, respectively, by South Africa and Japan, given the particular relevance and close association of these resolutions to the United Nations Conference.

The consensus outcome of the United Nations Conference cannot be overemphasized. In this regard, my delegation wishes to pay particular tribute to the roles played by Ambassador Reyes of Colombia, as President of the Conference, and of Ambassador dos Santos of Mozambique, as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. South Africa is particularly pleased that Africa's leadership role ensured that the Conference successfully adopted a realistic, achievable and comprehensive approach to address the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on the national, regional and global levels. The Programme of Action is a delicate balance of differing views, and provides for the first time an internationally agreed, comprehensive and achievable framework to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects based on the approach adopted by affected States.

As stated by South African delegations to this Committee, as well as to the Conference and its preparatory meetings, South Africa continues to believe that the conclusion of the Conference was not an end in itself, but merely the beginning of a long-term commitment by the international community to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in a holistic manner that provides, at a minimum, an agreed framework for future action in this regard. The success of the Conference will be judged by the follow-up actions undertaken in the context of the decisions of the Conference, rather than by the decisions themselves. South Africa therefore looks forward to intensified international cooperation in realizing the stated objectives and measures in the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference.

The main purpose of the draft resolution is to enable the General Assembly to act upon the recommendations made by the United Nations Conference and to solidify the follow-up to the Conference. The draft resolution also draws on some of the elements taken from resolution 55/33 Q, such as the destruction of surplus, collected and confiscated small arms and light weapons and the need for States to continue to promote and strengthen regional and subregional initiatives to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The draft resolution also encourages all initiatives to mobilize resources and expertise to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action and to provide assistance to States in the implementation of the Programme of Action. My delegation wishes to emphasize in particular the request in the draft resolution for the Secretary-General to ensure that resources and expertise are made available to the Secretariat in order to fulfil the responsibilities that States have assigned to it in the Programme of Action. In this regard, we appreciate the statement just made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, in favour of the Secretary-General's appeal for a small increase in the budget of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We wish to encourage Member States to give their support to this appeal.

In conclusion, I wish to extend our appreciation to the large number of delegations that have already sponsored the draft resolution, and to invite other delegations to also do so. The large number of sponsors emphasizes the strong and geographically broad-based support for the objectives of the draft resolution as embodied in the Programme of Action. I wish, however, to emphasize the importance of adopting the draft resolution without a vote, given its origin in the Programme of Action.

Mr. Noboru (Japan): My country is among the original sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects", which has just been introduced by Ambassador Camilo Reyes, who served as President of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in July.

Japan has been tackling issues related to small arms since 1995, when we first proposed a draft resolution to the General Assembly, which led to the July 2001 convening of the first United Nations Conference on small arms. My delegation highly appreciates the fact that the United Nations Conference achieved consensus on a Programme of Action which provides us with useful means for the future process of norm-setting and the implementation of activities in the

field, with the aim of resolving the serious problems caused by small arms and light weapons.

We may say that we have now entered a new phase with respect to this issue. This year, we are happy to propose a joint draft resolution, with Colombia and South Africa, to implement the outcome of the Conference, namely its Programme of Action, which suggests effective prescriptions for solving small-arms problems at the international, regional, subregional and national levels. The draft resolution includes important elements drawn from small-arms resolutions that both Japan and South Africa have proposed in past years. In combating the problems of small arms, joint efforts are imperative not only from affected countries but also from countries that possess the financial and technical means to tackle the problem.

In that sense, this joint draft resolution has a symbolic meaning in terms of cooperation between the South and the North. This draft resolution also shows the path that must be taken to meet the new challenges in the coming six years. My delegation sincerely hopes that this draft resolution will give the world community — those that suffer from small arms as well as those with serious concerns about this issue — the concrete means to implement the Programme of Action.

It is the wish of the sponsors that draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47 should be adopted by consensus.

My delegation wishes in conclusion to express its appreciation for the work done by Mr. Dhanapala and the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs. We fully support the content of his statement to the Committee.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): On behalf of all the other sponsoring delegations and of my own delegation, I hereby have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.43, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). My delegation is grateful to all the sponsoring countries for their support for the draft resolution. For the sake of brevity, I will with your permission, Mr. Chairman, refrain from reading out the names of the sponsors out loud.

Let me at the outset recall that 2001 is a very important year for the CCW Convention, as the second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention will be convened in December of this year. We are looking forward to that opportunity to further develop and strengthen this important instrument of humanitarian law.

Allow me briefly to describe the 1980 Convention. It is set up as a framework convention with four protocols annexed to it. Protocol I, adopted in 1980, deals with fragmentation weapons. Protocol II, also adopted in 1980, concerns the use on land of mines, booby traps and other devices; that Protocol was amended in 1996. A third Protocol, on incendiary weapons, was adopted 1980; and in 1995, Protocol IV, dealing with blinding laser weapons, was adopted. The Convention and its Protocols remain a highly important and integral part of international law applicable in armed conflicts.

There are no signs yet of a change in the worrying trend, which we have all witnessed since the end of the cold war, towards more civilians being afflicted by armed conflicts. That makes it all the more important for us to intensify our efforts to have the Convention and its Protocols fully implemented in order to reach the objectives of limiting the suffering of civilians and combatants alike. The draft resolution before the Committee calls upon all States to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols and to adhere to the provisions therein.

The draft resolution also reflects the development by which, under the amended Protocol II, States parties meet annually to consult and cooperate on all issues related to the operation of that Protocol. This year, the third conference will be convened on 10 December at Geneva. We encourage all States, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and interested non-governmental organizations, to participate.

The draft resolution addresses the issue of the upcoming second Review Conference for the Convention, which is to be held from 11 to 21 December 2001 at Geneva. The Review Conferences are important tools for addressing all issues concerning the Convention and its Protocols, how the operation of those instruments may be improved and how the Convention may be developed further. Currently, several proposals have been put forward by States

parties and by the ICRC for consideration at the Review Conference. Those proposals, which all aim at strengthening the Convention and its Protocols, deal with compliance procedures and mechanisms, explosive remnants of war, extension of the scope of application of the Convention and its Protocols to non-international armed conflicts, landmines other than anti-personnel mines and small-calibre ammunition.

We hope that the December Review Conference will be able to make progress and that it will be used to further strengthen the protection of civilians in conflict situations and to improve the humanitarian situation after conflicts have ended.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work carried out during the preparatory process by Ambassador Les Luck of Australia as president-designate of the Review Conference, and also to pledge our continued full support for him. We are confident that he will bring the 2001 Review Conference to a successful conclusion. In that context, we would also like to convey our gratitude and appreciation for the important work carried out by the respective friends of Chairs on the various proposals to be considered at the Review Conference.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.43 is intended to promote further universalization of and adherence to this very important body of humanitarian law. On behalf of all its sponsors, I wish to express our sincere hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the case with a similar text last year.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): As this is the first time that I have addressed the Committee at this session, admittedly at a late stage, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship, and also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I express my full confidence that your diplomatic skill will bring this session of the First Committee to a successful conclusion.

As in previous years, my delegation would like to speak in support of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.43, introduced by Sweden and co-sponsored by the Netherlands, on the 1980 Convention generally known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). This Convention and its Protocols serve to reduce the unnecessary suffering of combatants, as well as of civilians. Together, they are a major instrument of international humanitarian law, in that they build on the fundamental norm of law of armed conflict, which says that military necessity in armed conflict has to be constantly set against the humanitarian objective of preventing unnecessary suffering.

It is important that rules relating to this fundamental norm of law of armed conflict are codified in international legally binding instruments. It is equally important to apply the norm to all categories of conventional weapons, munitions and methods of conducting war. We therefore attach great importance to the upcoming Review Conference of the CCW in December because it provides the parties with an opportunity to further develop and strengthen the regime on just these two accounts.

This brings me to the new topics that are on the agenda for the Review Conference. Paragraph five of the draft resolution seeks to inform delegations about what will be discussed at the Review Conference. One of these topics, explosive remnants of war, is particularly dear to me. As Friend of the Chair for explosive Remnants of War, I want to express my gratitude for the good cooperation with, and support from, all the countries with which I have had the pleasure to consult this year in Geneva. Many colleagues have shared their thoughts with me and have been very frank, which made my task much easier. I also want to thank President-designate of the Review Conference, Ambassador Les Luck of Australia, for his kind words. His able guidance has proven invaluable so far in the process, and we are confident that Ambassador Luck will steer the Review Conference to a successful outcome.

I conclude by stressing the importance of the further universalization of, and adherence to, the CCW and its Protocols. We therefore join Sweden in expressing the wish that this draft resolution be adopted without a vote.

Ms. Moules (Australia): Australia welcomes the introduction by Sweden of the draft resolution on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and acknowledges Sweden's longstanding commitment to this important Convention. We are again pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

Australia looks forward to the Second Review Conference of the CCW, to be held in December this year, for which Australia's Ambassador, Les Luck, has been appointed President-designate and has served as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. The preparatory process has seen extensive consultations

between States parties and some real progress on the issues under consideration. As President-designate, Australia intends to work closely with other delegations over the coming weeks to ensure the success of the Conference. We see this draft resolution as contributing to that end.

The CCW is an important instrument of international humanitarian law, placing practical restrictions on the use of a range of conventional weapons, with the aim of limiting their impact. One of the Convention's most important attributes is its capacity to be developed to meet new challenges. The forthcoming Review Conference provides us with an opportunity to consider a range of proposals put forward by States parties to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention and assure its relevance to the nature of contemporary armed conflict.

As listed in paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the substantive issues to be considered at the Review Conference include both proposals on weapons not already covered by the Convention, such as explosive remnants of war and small-calibre ammunition, and others aimed at strengthening or extending existing provisions on anti-vehicle mines, compliance and the Convention's scope of application.

Given that there are real prospects for further work within the context of the Convention next year and beyond, and that it is important for there to be adequate resources for this work to continue, we welcome paragraph 6 and note that it does not prejudge any outcome that may emerge from the Review Conference itself.

Australia would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable work of the Friends of the Chair for the various proposals: Ambassador Sood of India, Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands, Ambassador Jakubowski of Poland, Ambassador Draganov and later Mr. Kolarov of Bulgaria. They have energetically assisted Ambassador Luck in his role as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and can take credit for much of the progress which has been made to date.

An equally important element of the Review Conference is the opportunity it will present for States parties to review the operation of the Convention's existing provisions and protocols. We will be encouraging States parties to utilize the Conference to identify ways in which the Convention may be more effectively implemented. Universalization of the Convention and its annexed protocols is a priority for Australia. We welcome paragraph 1 and the seventh preambular paragraph, and would encourage States which are not yet party to the Convention to accede to it at the earliest opportunity and to attend the Review Conference.

We also take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the field of international humanitarian law, particularly in the context of the CCW. The ICRC has been the driving force behind the "explosive remnants of war" proposal, and we commend it for its contribution. This initiative has prompted a growing recognition of the urgent need for the international community to take action to limit the impact of unexploded ordnance on civilian populations.

Finally, as part of our efforts to promote the Convention in the lead-up to the Review Conference, we would urge those States that have not yet done so to join us in sponsoring this draft resolution.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo — the draft resolution on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.51/Rev.1.

The extent and persistence of the phenomenon of insecurity and organized crime linked to the illegal circulation of small arms, their illegal international transfer and their accumulation in numerous countries constitute a threat to populations and to national, regional and subregional security, and also contribute to the destabilization of States

The preamble to the draft resolution enunciates the compelling reasons for the initiatives taken at the subregional level and by the United Nations in order to better define the problem of small arms. It mentions the Secretary-General's Millennium Report, the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Programme of Action of the first United Nations Conference on the

Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The operative part speaks about the activities that have been undertaken by ECOWAS, in the West African subregion, the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations in implementing this initiative. It also encourages the establishment of national commission to counter illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the involvement of organizations and civil society associations in this process through its recommendations. This measure is based on the moratorium on the import and the export of small arms, signed by our States at Abuja, Nigeria, in 1998, which has been renewed for a period of three years, beginning 1 November 2001. This seemed necessary to us in order to advance efforts for greater cooperation in stemming this scourge.

We invite the international community to continue to support the efforts made by the ECOWAS States. We thank all those countries that were kind enough to sponsor this draft resolution, the substance of which remains a subject of great concern in relation to our States' development. We welcome the cooperation with the Secretariat and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, and we encourage them to continue their efforts in support of the various initiatives.

Finally, as in previous years, we hope that the draft resolution on this subject will be adopted by consensus by the First Committee.

Mr. Nébié (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to express my support to Mali's statement made on behalf of the States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

At the beginning of this week, we considered points concerning nuclear weapons and we emphasized the dangers they represent for us and for future generations. While it is true that nuclear weapons represent a constant threat to mankind's very existence, then we must not lose sight of the fact that so-called conventional or light weapons cause great loss of human lives because they fuel armed conflicts and large-scale criminal activity. They are used constantly, their numbers are uncontrollable and their circulation and dissemination cannot be kept in check.

Burkina Faso reaffirms its full adherence to the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Aware and concerned that these arms contribute to the destabilization of States of the subregion and that they represent an impediment to the establishment of a climate of peace, which is vital for the socio-economic development of peoples, the Government of Burkina Faso has established a high-level authority to control the importation and use of arms. This high-level authority is presided over by the Prime Minister, our head of Government, and is composed of members of the Government, the Assembly of People's Deputies and the Chamber of Representatives.

This high-level authority is responsible for controlling all arms imports by the Government, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Economic Community of West African States moratorium, in order to prevent and hinder all illicit trade in arms on the territory of Burkina Faso. At the request of the United Nations, the high-level authority will have inventories of all types of arms warehoused in Burkina Faso. The United Nations will be able to verify any information on the territory of Burkina Faso provided by the high-level authority.

In the framework of the implementation of the ECOWAS Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, Burkina Faso has offered sites for observation zone number 2. All of these measures adopted by Burkina Faso respond to resolution 55/33 Q, adopted by the General Assembly, which is dealt with in the Secretary-General's report (A/56/296) entitled "Illicit traffick in small arms and light weapons".

Burkina Faso commends the holding in July 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The resulting Programme of Action falls short of the expectations of developing States whose desire for peace and security is evident. However, Burkina Faso considers this Programme of Action an important step towards a comprehensive solution to this phenomenon that has such a great impact on our countries.

Along these lines, the Government has established a national commission whose role is to create the necessary conditions for the implementation of measures taken at three levels — subregional,

regional and African — in fighting the illicit circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

I wish to conclude by pointing out that my delegation is a sponsor of most of the draft resolutions that will be considered following the general debate on conventional arms. Subject to changes that might be made, my country fully supports the various draft resolutions and will spare no effort to see them adopted and implemented.

Ms. Raholinirina (Madagascar) (*spoke in French*): My delegation associates itself fully with the statements made by Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia and the representative of Mali in introducing draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47 and draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.51, on small arms and light weapons.

My delegation wishes to make a few comments, given the importance that my country attaches to this question.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has become one of the major concerns of the international community, in view of the grave danger it poses to international stability and security. Curbing access to these weapons is one of the major challenges for the international community today.

The many political, economic and social consequences of the anarchic proliferation of small arms and light weapons are well known to us all. At this stage of our discussion, my delegation would simply like to stress that the great availability of small arms has established a culture of violence and impunity in many regions, particularly in Africa. These types of arms have increased the forces of repression, a source of unspeakable human suffering, particularly among women and children. Favouring a culture of the prevention of conflicts over a culture of reaction, my country considers that it is extremely important for the international community to continue to study the question of the destabilizing accumulation of small arms.

In this context, my delegation welcomes the holding in July 2001 of the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was a decisive phase in defining a global and concerted approach to check the destructive effects of this phenomenon.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Camilo Reyes's efforts in the holding of that important Conference. Even if small arms cannot be eradicated from one day to the next, and even if the Conference did not achieve the desired results in many respects, the universal awareness of the pressing need to put an end to their proliferation and to limit their presence marks an important point of departure for a world movement to fight against one of the most urgent problems of our century.

The measures and the recommendations covered in the Programme of Action adopted at that Conference demonstrate the firm determination of the international community to fight mercilessly the proliferation of light weapons. Given the very real, far from theoretical, danger that this scourge presents to humankind and the contemporary international system, the international community has no alternative to the rapid and complete implementation of the Programme of Action. The tragic events of 11 September, which have cast a shadow over the international environment, strengthen our conviction about this, given the very close link between the illicit trafficking of light weapons and terrorist activity.

The ease of acquisition and manipulation of such arms by individuals and non-State groups worsens the climate of insecurity in which we live today. My delegation would like to see matters of small arms held by individuals and their trade or transfer to non-State groups — on which, unfortunately, the Conference could not reach a consensus — given more attention so that we can come closer to meeting the aspirations of the international community. We feel that on a subject so closely linked to the suffering of humankind the sacred nature of human life should be taken into account, above all other considerations.

While it is true that the responsibility for putting an end to the illicit trade in light weapons primarily falls to each State, international action and cooperation play a vital role in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The success of our collective action will depend on the political will of all States to abide by their commitments contained in it, especially when it comes to the effective application of arms embargoes decreed by the Security Council. In view of the essentially humanitarian nature of the problems caused by this phenomenon, all members of the international community, including non-governmental

organizations, have to cooperate jointly to meet this challenge.

We would like to express our support for measures to be taken at the national, regional and world levels. Nevertheless, Madagascar attaches particular importance to part III of the Programme of Action, dealing with implementation, international cooperation and assistance. For my delegation, the fact that implementation has been included in this part means that without international cooperation and assistance this Programme of Action would remain a dead letter, like so many other programmes of action that have fallen into disuse.

Reiterating paragraph 14 of the preamble to the Programme of Action, my delegation stresses the urgent need for international cooperation and assistance, including financial and technical assistance, to support and facilitate efforts at the local, national, regional and global levels to tackle the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation would like to see a greater financial commitment by the international community in order to enable the United Nations to play a more active role in the implementation of the Programme of Action, in particular in developing the capacity for training on small arms stockpile management and security, as stipulated in part III, paragraph 8, as well as the development of an international instrument for tracing light weapons, as set out in part IV, paragraph 1 (c). My delegation supports the appeal made by Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala along those lines.

Since it represents the United Nations in the field, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should play a paramount role in promoting the initiatives needed to implement the Programme of Action. In this context, we support disarmament programmes, the reintegration of former combatants into society and the voluntary surrender of arms in exchange for specific development projects. The encouraging results in this area lead us to agree with the proposal to set up a special fund within UNDP in order to support such programmes. Madagascar also asks that the Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures, set up in 1998, be given adequate resources to attain its objectives, particularly those concerning assistance to countries that are victims of the illicit trade in light weapons.

In conclusion, the delay by the international community in dealing with the proliferation of light weapons has to be made up for by the immediate implementation of the Programme of Action. It is the duty of us all to make sure that this scourge stops imposing its own laws and persecuting innocent civilians. It is in this spirit that Madagascar has co-sponsored draft resolutions A/C.1/56/L.47 and L.51, which we feel will contribute towards advancing the implementation process and freeing the world of the destructive power of light weapons.

My delegation hopes that the two draft resolutions will receive the Committee's comprehensive support and be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Halter (Switzerland): I would like to share with the Committee some of Switzerland's views and positions regarding the upcoming Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to which we attach great importance.

I begin by thanking the President-designate, Ambassador Luck of Australia, and the Friends of the Chair on their excellent work during the preparatory process. Thanks to their efforts, States parties should be in a position to agree on a certain number of important and specific steps to improve and further develop the 1980 Convention. My country is particularly satisfied that humanitarian considerations appear to have strengthened awareness of the necessity for further progress and a more regular and structured CCW process.

Switzerland welcomes the proposals presented on issues such as compliance and the extension of the scope of the Convention and of its protocols to non-international armed conflicts, on explosive remnants of war, as well as on landmines other than anti-personnel mines, and is ready to support them. My country has submitted two proposals of its own, one on the regulation of submunitions and one on the issue of small-calibre ammunition. I thank States parties, the President-designate, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and, especially, the Friend of the Chair on the issue of small-calibre ammunition, Ambassador Jakubowski of Poland, and the Friend of the Chair on explosive remnants of war, Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands, for their support.

The Swiss initiative on submunitions has to be seen in the context of the proposal by the ICRC on explosive remnants of war, which my country supports wholeheartedly. As recent conflicts have shown, such munitions can have, after the end of hostilities, effects similar to those of anti-personnel mines, and the number of accidents caused by unexploded submunitions among civilians has reached alarming levels, surpassing even those observed in the case of anti-personnel mines.

The basic objective of our proposal, presented two years ago at the first session of the Preparatory Committee in the light of humanitarian concerns, is to provide for a self-destruction and deactivation mechanism with 98 per cent reliability for such munitions. The technology for this is already available and affordable, and has been introduced in a number of armed forces. Switzerland hopes and expects that the next Review Conference will agree on a mandate for a group of governmental experts to begin negotiation of a protocol or protocols on explosive remnants of war, including submunitions, to be completed within a time-frame that reflects the urgency of the problem.

The aim of our proposal on small-calibre ammunition is to modernize and reinforce the basic humanitarian rule, introduced at the Hague Peace Conference in 1899, that injuries caused by bullets which expand or flatten with too great a facility in the human body are excessive, and not necessary in order to achieve legitimate military objectives. To this end, my Government has developed a testing method, including a number of technical parameters, focused on the wounding potential of small arms ammunition. That potential is the crucial criterion for determining whether or not ammunition causes excessive suffering or unnecessary injury. The proposal is of a preventive nature, even if it does not hinder the development of new weapons systems that might be considered necessary from the military point of view. Switzerland hopes and expects that the next Review Conference will agree to ask a group of technical experts to pursue and deepen discussions on the best methods to deal with the question of small arms ammunition in the context of the CCW.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the offer of my country to put our testing facilities in Thun at the disposal of any country wishing to test its small-calibre ammunition and weapons systems.

Mr. Clodumar (Nauru): As Chairman of the Pacific Islands Forum Group, I am taking the floor today to make a statement on behalf of our members represented at the United Nations: Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Nauru.

The tragic events of 11 September have refocused the work of this Committee and highlighted the need for effective disarmament and arms control machinery, including in the area of conventional weapons. This work includes the pressing task of more effectively controlling the spread and availability of small arms so as to bring safety and prosperity to the lives of innocent and vulnerable people and to prevent terrorist groups from gaining access to such weapons. We must continue to do all we can, through the international disarmament machinery, to try to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms, which has a destabilizing impact on security in the Pacific island region. In our region, the possession by the wrong people of even a handful of unsophisticated weapons or ammunition can result in civilians and communities being threatened, and can affect the viability of democratically elected Governments.

In July this year, the Pacific island countries joined others in welcoming the adoption of the Programme of Action to combat the illicit trade in small arms. With about 85 practical measures to address the small arms problem, the Programme of Action is a seminal document for the Pacific island region and will have enduring value as a guide to future activities to control illicit small arms flows. The Programme of Action consolidates and strengthens the concerted efforts made by the international community over the past decade to address the devastating humanitarian and socio-economic problems caused by the illicit small arms trade. With the successful adoption of the Programme of Action, international efforts have entered a new phase. The focus now is on ensuring the full and effective implementation of that Programme.

The Programme of Action will ensure that the issue of small arms retains a prominent place on the international agenda through the inclusion of dedicated follow-up activities, such as biennial meetings of States and the review conference to assess implementation. This built-in assessment process will

be important in setting new benchmarks and ensuring that international efforts do not stagnate, but evolve to meet new challenges. In this context, we welcome the draft resolution presented by Colombia, Japan and South Africa, which gives essential backing to the implementation of the Programme.

There is close synergy between the Programme of Action and the commitment of the Pacific island countries to develop more effective small arms controls. In the promotion of the implementation of the Programme of Action, a key focus for our region will be to finalize draft model legislation for a common approach to weapons control in the South Pacific. That is now being adjusted to reflect relevant provisions of the Programme of Action. By including these elements in the model legislation, we aim to place the South Pacific region out in front in terms of implementing the Programme.

Another key focus will be the establishment of national points of contact, as well as points of contact within our subregion and appropriate regional organizations, so as to ensure that we can liaise on matters relating to the implementation of the Programme. We also plan to coordinate annual information reports to the Secretary-General on our regional progress in implementing the Programme.

In March this year, New Zealand hosted, with the United Nations, an Asia-Pacific Regional Disarmament Conference, which included a strong focus on small arms. The meeting emphasized the importance of the Nadi Framework in providing a basis for regional activities, and provided another vehicle for regional exchange and cooperation.

The Pacific Islands Forum Small Arms Workshop, hosted in May this year by Australia, further demonstrated the region's commitment to the cause. As a follow-up to the Workshop, Australia will sponsor visits by Australian Defence Force personnel to regional countries to provide technical advice on improving armoury security and accountancy systems for small arms. Other follow-up activities to build on the progress made at the Brisbane workshop are being planned, including by Japan, to reinforce the region's targeted approach to improving regional security through more effective small arms controls.

The adoption of the Programme of Action at the July Conference was a significant achievement. But its true value will come from the strength and willingness of Governments and non-governmental organizations alike to implement its provisions faithfully. Pacific island countries are fully committed to that goal.

Mr. Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): As I am speaking in the Committee for the first time this session, I would like to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, the satisfaction of my delegation at seeing you guiding our work. We warmly congratulate you, Sir, and assure you of our full support, being convinced of your great skill and tireless devotion, which will ensure the success of our deliberations.

The bloody and sudden occurrence of acts of terrorism on 11 September dramatically illustrated the particularly aggressive nature of that scourge. Now that we are feeling less emotional, we must reflect deeply on this new dimension of the problem of the threat to international peace and security. My delegation reaffirms its strong condemnation of those terrorist attacks and once again expresses to the American people the sincere sympathy and absolute solidarity of the people of Guinea.

In the context of the item on our agenda relating to conventional weapons, my delegation is particularly interested in the sub-item on assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them.

The excellent reports that the Secretary-General has submitted for our consideration, in documents A/56/182 and A/56/296, bear witness to not only the complexity of the issue, but also the increased awareness of the problem and the relevance of the many consultations and fruitful exchanges of information that have been organized between States at the subregional, regional and international levels.

One of the first things my delegation noticed in examining those reports is that the Secretariat has made considerable efforts to meet the General Assembly's expectations regarding the implementation of resolutions 55/33 F and Q, which were adopted by consensus on 20 November 2000. A second observation is that the results achieved clearly prove that an international and integrated approach is the best strategy for combating the proliferation and illicit trade in light weapons in all its aspects.

With regard to the outbreak of numerous regional conflicts and civil wars which have entailed great costs

to many States — particularly on the African continent — it is correct to say that the issue of light weapons is one of the major challenges the international community must face today. My country belongs to a subregion that has been particularly affected by the scourge of the proliferation of light weapons.

Beset by all sorts of difficult problems resulting from the presence on its territory of hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled the wars in neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone, and having been victim to repeated rebel attacks on its southern border, Guinea has evaluated, and knows all too well, the harmful effects of easy access to, and uncontrolled use of, these weapons. Therefore it has always demonstrated real political will to contribute to strengthened regional, subregional and international cooperation to control and eradicate this danger which is destabilizing and ruining our States.

Guinea has taken on an active role in the Organization of African Unity to implement all the initiatives of the Bamako Declaration, which reflected the common position of African States on this issue. Within the framework of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), my country has also became party to the moratorium adopted at Abuja in October 1998 on the manufacturing, import and export of light weapons in West Africa. At this point, allow me to say that my delegation places great hope in the effective implementation of the recommendation contained in Security Council resolution 1343 (2001) calling on the international community to extend the necessary assistance for the implementation of the moratorium.

In accordance with the Bamako Declaration, my country has created a national commission to combat the proliferation of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons. This body — which aims to support sustained cooperation with other national commissions in the subregion and with African and international institutions working to strengthen peace and security — has already developed a national action plan focussed essentially on fostering a true culture of peace. My delegation, which supports draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.51/Rev.1, which was introduced by Mali on behalf of the countries of ECOWAS, would like here to appeal for financial support from bilateral and multilateral partners to mobilize the necessary resources to achieve the objectives of this action plan.

The fight against the scourge of light weapons requires a comprehensive and global approach that includes civil society, which is an inexhaustible source of initiatives, experience and competence. This undeniable truth accounts for the fact that such representative non-governmental organizations as the Lansana Conté Foundation for Peace, the Guinean Council of Peace, Friendship and Solidarity and the Women's Network of the Mano River Union are today particularly active in Guinea in the pursuit and consolidation of peace in the subregion. Thanks to their dynamism and insight, and the wise support of our heads of State, civil society is in the process of writing a promising new page of history through the very positive and determined role it has played in the progress made by the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in their efforts to restore confidence and promote stability in the subregion.

My delegation calls for the international community to support the process under way in the Mano River Union by contributing, in particular, to putting in place the material and psychological conditions necessary for refugees to return to their countries of origin; extending tangible assistance for the implementation of measures undertaken in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; and, finally, by effectively supporting the reconstruction and development programmes.

At the end of the recent Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, my country was firmly convinced that an important step had been taken in the search for solutions to one of the major challenges confronting the international community. My delegation believes it unthinkable to stop at this point. Despite the sometimes understandable differences, we should pursue dialogue, undertake further study, increase understanding and, above all, put the common interest first in order to arrive at the necessary consensus to remaining points of contention. If all States have a clear vision of their responsibilities in the face of this common problem, we shall be able to make good progress towards peace and security for all.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): The issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trade has always been a matter of high priority to the delegation of Nepal. It was with this priority in mind that my delegation participated actively in the recently

concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Available statistics suggest that small arms and light weapons constituted the weapons of choice in 46 of 49 major conflicts since 1990, resulting in the death of about 4 million people. Disappointingly, out of these 4 million war-related deaths 90 per cent were innocent civilians, of whom 80 per cent were women and children. This is enough to unravel the tragedy brought about by the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons around the world.

It is indeed very frustrating to learn that the world is currently awash with about 500 million small arms, enough to have one for every 12 persons, at a time when many people in the developing countries, let alone in the most vulnerable ones, are not even able to find a teacher for every 30 children or a doctor for every 30,000 people.

Although the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons has global implications, it has proved to be the biggest curse for the most disadvantaged and underprivileged countries. Increasingly frustrated unemployed and disorganized youth in poor countries tend to be easily lured by terrorist organizations to take up arms and terrorize the population, which leads to chaos and insecurity in the society.

It is our conviction that concerted efforts should be made to create a congenial environment to enable people to enjoy security without possessing guns and ammunition. The problem of the proliferation of small arms and their illicit trade is a question involving both the supply of and demand for such weapons. Curbing the unimpeded supply of small arms should necessarily be complemented by endeavours to reduce the demand for them. That requires adequate investment in developmental activities so that people can feel that they do not have to resort to violence to ensure their livelihood. Hence, the need arises for promoting the culture of peace to replace the culture of violence and crime.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal has recently launched an innovative integrated security and development programme, especially in violence-prone areas where insurgency has been on the rise for the last few years. The objective of such a programme is to promote developmental activities and to create an environment of security by countering illegally armed elements which seek to challenge law and order.

At the July United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the international community looked forward to seeing the narrowing of differences among Member States in order that they might agree on a comprehensive programme of action to fight the global menace of small arms. We joined the majority of participating nations in laying emphasis on two core issues of the problem: the unrestrained civilian possession of some categories of small arms and the supply of small arms to non-state actors. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference failed to contain these vital provisions, to the utter dismay of the majority of delegations, even though it contains many good elements, including regional, national and global measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We strongly feel that the international community should build on the success of the United Nations Conference on small arms and pursue attempts to strengthen the regime of combating the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons by incorporating provisions to curb unhindered civilian possession of certain small arms and their supply to entities other than the State. With this fact very much under consideration, my delegation will be supporting the draft resolution on the subject introduced before the First Committee.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), and its associated States, Bolivia and Chile, on agenda items 74 (w), entitled "Small arms", and 74 (t), entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

Regarding the first item, the countries on whose behalf I speak consider that the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is only a first positive step towards reducing the international proliferation of small arms in the years ahead.

When this process began, many countries, including the majority in our region, were seeking a

more daring international plan. The approved Programme of Action reflects the minimum common ground among the various positions and we therefore perceive it only as an initial step towards beginning to confront the problems caused by the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of these weapons, which affects the safety of millions of people around the world, in particular women and children.

Among the most relevant aspects of the Programme of Action, we note the following commitments: the designation of the illicit manufacture of and trade in small arms and light weapons as a crime, so that those responsible for these criminal activities can be penalized in accordance with the relevant domestic legislation; the strengthening of cooperation among States; and the establishment of follow-up mechanisms to monitor and promote the implementation of the commitments undertaken.

The United Nations Conference on small arms was the first gathering to deal with the humanitarian crises caused by easy access to arms. It is essential for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action that the United Nations and Governments pay more attention to the allocation of resources required to alleviate and prevent these crises.

At the regional level, we will focus our actions on the effective implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of And Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and of the Model Regulations for the control of these devices.

At the subregional level, MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile have pledged to work towards the creation of a common register of vendors and purchasers of firearms, their parts and ammunition, which will contain the names of individuals or companies linked to the sale of arms and a list of ports of embarkation and/or arrival authorized to engage in trafficking in these items.

The Interior Ministers of our countries are currently working to make operative a security information exchange system for MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile. This information mechanism will make it possible to request and respond to information supplied by the respective databases. The standardization of requirements will be the starting point for a real-time network control system for firearms and ammunition through informational register nodes to be established by each country. We have also undertaken the harmonization of national legislation in this field.

In MERCOSUR, we believe that the subregional context is the main focus for the harmonization of customs legislation and regulations. We benefit from the high degree of convergence that exists in our national legislations in this field. Consequently, we have established a regional working group to harmonize legislation on firearms and ammunition in the expanded MERCOSUR, which could develop into a subregional mechanism for the implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action.

MERCOSUR and its associated States note with satisfaction the outcome of subregional programmes and measures to reduce the demand for small arms and light weapons, to encourage their voluntary surrender in situations of excessive stockpiling and to provide greater protection to citizens in the fight against insecurity. We also consider positive the initiatives of international and non-governmental organizations that contribute, through advertising and promotion campaigns, towards a culture of peace.

MERCOSUR and its associated States have had some success in combating this problem. While recognizing the specific circumstances of each region, we feel that our experience can bring positive elements to the efforts of other subregions to achieve the same objectives.

With regard to the problem of anti-personnel mines, it is never redundant to speak about the devastating effects of these devices. Not a day goes by without the media's reporting on the nefarious and indiscriminate impact of these weapons on populations in many different parts of the world, especially as a result of their continuing lethal power after the formal end of an armed conflict.

The international community demonstrated its resolute determination to attack the problem in a collective and coordinated manner with the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which was adopted in 1997. One year before that, the great majority of Latin American countries, through the Organization of American States, launched their struggle against this scourge with the adoption of resolutions declaring the western hemisphere to be a zone free of anti-personnel mines. In 1998, the heads of State of the States members of

MERCOSUR and its associated States subscribed to a political declaration designating our subregion a zone of peace free of weapons of mass destruction. Chile and Uruguay ratified the Convention this year. Thus, the six members of MERCOSUR and its associated States have now become parties to the Ottawa Convention. We are pleased to announce that national legislations are in the process of being harmonized, in compliance with the Convention's provisions, and that we are proceeding to destroy the arsenals under our respective jurisdictions.

However, we are disappointed to note that some of the countries that are among the largest producers of anti-personnel mines are still not parties to the Convention. Once more, we call on States that have not yet done so to join the majority of the international community in this fight.

We note with satisfaction the progress achieved in mine clearance in extensive areas and in providing assistance to mine victims. We continue to believe that the efforts made in this domain are important, and we encourage all initiatives contributing to expediting these processes, which are a fundamental element in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies. In this respect, several members of MERCOSUR have done intensive work in assisting mine clearance as participants in this Organization's peacekeeping missions.

The convening of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention is of particular importance to our region not only because significant progress was achieved relative to the previous meeting but also because the meeting was held in Nicaragua, which is one of the Latin American countries most affected by the scourge of anti-personnel mines.

The progress made on mine clearance activities, the growing number of affected countries joining the implementation and follow-up work and the sponsorship programme are all welcome developments for our subregion, as is the spirit of transparency and inclusion that has characterized the efforts to ensure compliance with the Convention. That spirit will help ensure that we maintain the dynamic and effective character of our efforts for a world free of anti-personnel mines. However, while recognizing the importance of all these efforts, we insist that it is only with the participation of the entire international community that we will be able restore security to all those exposed to this danger, of whom, regrettably, there are still too many.

Mr. Abou (Niger) (*spoke in French*): Since I am taking the floor for the first time before the Committee, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of the Niger, to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your noteworthy election. My delegation is pleased and congratulates you on the outstanding way you are carrying out the duties entrusted to you. I would also like to congratulate and convey our appreciation to the other members of the Bureau, who assist you so effectively in leading our work.

Allow me also to sincerely thank the Secretariat for the quality of the documents provided to us and to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his introductory remarks, which were both enriching and illuminating.

My delegation reiterates its condemnation of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and conveys its sympathy to the American delegation. The attacks prove that this is a question of international security; thus, our efforts to limit and control all types of weapons must be given appropriate importance and must be a subject of broadly shared, full commitment.

Thus, while we actively participate in the international community's efforts for the control, limitation and eradication of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction, my country attaches the greatest importance to the issue of conventional weapons. Particularly on the issue of small arms and light weapons, it should be noted that the international community has very fortunately committed itself to seeking solutions to the problems of the illicit trade in and transfer of small arms and of the devastating effects of this phenomenon on the peace, security and stability of many countries, most of which are not producers of this type of arms. My country is pleased with the results achieved by the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in July 2001, in particular the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate this illicit trade. In this respect, my delegation fully associates itself with and supports all initiatives to ensure the implementation of the Programme of Action, as called for by draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, introduced by the delegation of Colombia.

My delegation regularly sponsors and strongly supports draft resolutions on assistance to States for curbing the illicit trade in and collection of small arms. The draft resolution introduced by the delegation of Mali, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.51/Rev.1, has our total support. We have long abided by the recommendations of the United Nations Saharo-Sahelian advisory mission of 1994-1995. Specifically, in 1994 we decided to create a national commission on the collection and control of illicit arms.

Since the peace agreements, the dynamic of peace-building by means of the reintegration of former combatants has enabled the Niger, with the support of the United Nations system and of the group of concerned countries, to successfully pursue concrete activities to recover and destroy illicit arms.

After the "flame of peace" event, held in September 2000, a general, spontaneous movement for handing in arms enabled the collection and destruction of several hundred more weapons. However, we are aware that the public awareness campaign should be carried out on a larger scale in order to collect the maximum number of arms and to promote development activities. This is the idea behind the upcoming pilot project for the collection of illicit arms and sustainable development in N'guigmi. The project has the financial and technical support of the United Nations Development Programme and the countries participating in the group of interested States on practical disarmament measures. It will provide the opportunity to test the ability of peoples to build a shared, peaceful life based on the consensual management of resources, their adherence to the principle of disarmament within the framework of a "weapons for development" fund, and the possibility of extending this kind of activity to other regions of the country and beyond, to the entire subregion of West Africa.

To carry this out, we must suppress the demand for arms, prevent recourse to them and minimize the possibility of a resurgence of new conflicts among different communities, conflicts that are essentially rooted in problem of sharing and exploiting resources and infrastructure.

We are convinced of the need to curb the illicit trade, circulation and possession of small arms. They cause too much insecurity, which negates all attempts at development and undermines the efforts of leaders and the generous assistance of development partners.

Mr. Lint (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". The countries of Central Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as Iceland and Liechtenstein, as European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the adoption last July by the United Nations Conference of a Programme of Action on the fight against the illicit traffic in small arms in all its aspects. It involves measures to be taken at the national, regional and global levels, particularly in regard to export controls; the marking and registering of arms; the management of stocks and surpluses; the threefold question of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and cooperation and assistance.

The follow-up process established by the Conference is covered in draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47. Its sponsors — Colombia, Japan and South Africa — can count on the complete support of the European Union.

The problem of light weapons and small arms has many facets. There is no single solution, but progress can be made at all levels through a range of instruments.

At the global level, the fight against illicit networks depends on better identification of the supply sources. It is well known that most of the illicit weapons found in illicit networks have been manufactured legally and diverted later to supply parallel markets. Improving the ability to trace weapons and the exchange of information between States would thus be a concrete measure to fight against that phenomenon.

In that context, the European Union, which supports the Franco-Swiss initiative, also supports the proposal in paragraph 10 of the draft resolution that there be a United Nations study to examine the development of an international instrument to enable

States to identify and trace light weapons in a timely and reliable manner.

We expect a great deal from the work of the group of experts, who will be able to rely on work already done, particularly the document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, we call upon States to continue studying this question and to take initiatives, as called for in the Programme of Action.

The European Union wishes to stress the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the prevention, control and elimination of the illicit brokerage in small arms and light weapons.

The European Union and its member States are determined to cooperate actively with other countries to implement the Programme of Action in all its aspects and to provide the necessary assistance within that framework.

The meeting of States in 2003 will give us the opportunity to take stock for the first time of the progress made in implementing the Programme of Action and to identify new means to combat the illicit trade in light weapons in all its aspects. We will thus be able to complete and improve the Programme of Action at an appropriate time.

Mr. Dzundev (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour, on behalf of the sponsoring States and my delegation, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.41 on the maintenance of international security — good-neighbourliness, stability and development in South-Eastern Europe. The original sponsors have been joined by other countries, so that the full list is: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. My delegation is grateful to all sponsoring countries for their support for the draft resolution.

This draft resolution is a follow-up to resolution 55/27. It addresses the complexity of the issues of security, disarmament, stability and cooperation, and reflects the developments in the region over the previous year. Its thrust is to further promote a culture of good-neighbourliness, cooperation and integration, and to identify the measures and efforts that may lead to the further stabilization of South-Eastern Europe and the easing of threats to its security. In this context, it must be underlined that the primary responsibility for the region's future rests with the States themselves, but also that the initiatives of international organizations and all other regional organizations have a significant role to play. No less important is the full observance of relevant international instruments.

The region of South-Eastern Europe has undergone many positive changes that have brought about a new climate of cooperation among States, but it continues to face various challenges that threaten its overall security and stability. The most encouraging positive developments are intensified cooperation among the countries of the region and their further rapprochement with the European Union, which will pave the way for lasting stability and democratic and economic development in the region. The United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union, the Stability Pact and other regional organizations and initiatives have further contributed to this new positive climate.

Unfortunately, some parts of the region have been negatively affected by extremism in its worst forms, including terrorist acts that are closely connected to various forms of organized crime and that require a strong national and regional response in combating it. In this context, the issue of small arms and light weapons, one of the main destabilizing factors in the region, also requires concerted regional efforts.

However, there are some positive developments in the area of arms control and confidence-building measures. One is the conclusion of the document on article V of annex 1B of the Dayton Peace Accords regarding regional arms control and related confidence-building measures.

Slight changes have been made in the text. In the sixth preambular paragraph "remarkable" has been replaced by "significant". Furthermore, in paragraph 2, after the phrase "to prevent conflicts" the words "in South-Eastern Europe" have been inserted. In

paragraph 3, in the last line, the words "and international" have been deleted. In paragraph 10, in the second line, after "European Union" the words "other contributors" have been inserted. The last change is in paragraph 15, where the phrase "in some parts of" has been inserted before "South-Eastern Europe". The changes have been submitted to the Secretariat.

In conclusion, on behalf of the sponsors, I express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Addressing the Committee for the first time, my delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman, and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

I have the honour of introducing the draft resolution entitled "Regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Question in Central Africa", contained in document A/C.1/56/L.2, on behalf of the following countries: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe, Zambia, and, of course, my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Since it was set up in 1992 by the Secretary-General in order to encourage arms limitation, disarmament, non-proliferation and development in the Central African subregion, the Standing Advisory Committee has taken measures to strengthen confidence and the development of security cooperation between its member States. Under its aegis, a non-aggression pact and a mutual assistance pact were signed between the member States. The members have also set up a mechanism to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in Central Africa called the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The Standing Advisory Committee has organized various subregional conferences dealing with security matters of concern to Central Africa, such as the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, held in N'Djamena, Chad, in October 1999, and the Subregional Conference on the Question of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Central Africa, held in Bujumbura, Burundi, in August 2000. These meetings enabled us to adopt pertinent recommendations on ways and means to find appropriate solutions to the problems under examination.

Thus, the Standing Advisory Committee has done some particularly useful work since it was set up, and it therefore deserves the full support of the international community, and of our Committee in particular. This is the thrust of the draft resolution that we have the honour to introduce today.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.2 takes up practically the same matters dealt with by the corresponding resolution last year. Its only new elements reflect the activities that the Advisory Committee has undertaken since the last session. The draft resolution reaffirms support for efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at regional and subregional levels in order to ease tensions and conflicts and to further peace, stability and sustainable development in Central Africa.

The draft resolution notes with satisfaction the progress made by the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee in implementing the programme of activities for the period 2000-2001. It also emphasizes the importance of providing the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee with the essential support they need to carry out the full programme of activities which they adopted at their ministerial meetings.

I wish to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the valuable assistance they have constantly given to our Committee. I would also like to express my gratitude to countries and institutions that have contributed to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, thus enabling it to continue its activities to promote peace and security in Central Africa. I would also like to extend my thanks to the members of the First Committee for the support that they have unceasingly given to draft resolutions on the activities of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. We hope that they will continue to do this and will support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.2 so that it will be adopted by consensus, as have those of past years.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor to introduce the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/56/L.27 and A/C.1/56/L.28. First, on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Colombia,

Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Turkey and my own delegation, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.27, entitled "Regional disarmament".

International security and disarmament need to be pursued at both the international and regional levels. While international disarmament measures are vital, in most instances security and disarmament can be most effectively promoted at the regional level.

As the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.27 notes, guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security were adopted by the Disarmament Commission in 1993. These guidelines remain relevant in the present day to promote regional disarmament in the conventional and non-conventional fields.

It is now quite evident that in most of the areas of tension and potential conflict — the Middle East, South Asia, North-East Asia and Central Asia — the regional approach could offer a most effective basis to promote disarmament and enhance security. The draft resolution notes the recent proposals for disarmament at the regional and subregional levels and expresses the conviction that endeavours to promote regional disarmament, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region, and in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, would enhance the security of all States.

This draft resolution therefore stresses the need for sustained efforts, affirms that global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other and calls States to conclude agreements, wherever possible. It welcomes the initiatives towards disarmament, non-proliferation and security undertaken by some countries at the regional and subregional levels and supports and encourages confidence-building measures.

The adoption of this draft resolution will encourage the countries concerned to pursue endeavours for regional disarmament and help to strengthen regional and international security. The sponsors hope that, like last year's resolution on regional disarmament, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.27 will be adopted without a vote.

Now I would like briefly to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.28, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Fiji, Germany, Italy, Nepal, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and my own delegation.

The draft resolution is aimed at promoting disarmament endeavours in an area that so far has not received due recognition in international disarmament forums: the pursuit of conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels. The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.28 outlines, in its preambular part, several vital principles and precepts relating to the issue, including the crucial role of conventional arms control in peace and security; that threats to peace and security in the post-cold-war era arise mainly among States located in the same region or subregion; that the preservation of a balance in the defence capabilities of States at the lowest level of armaments would contribute to peace and stability; that agreements to strengthen regional peace and security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces is a desirable objective, that militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security; and that an important objective should be to prevent the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and to avoid aggression.

The preamble of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.28 also notes with particular interest the initiatives taken in various regions, including among a number of Latin American countries, and the proposals for conventional arms control in South Asia, and recognizes the relevance and value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which it describes as a cornerstone of European security.

The operative part of the draft resolution decides to give urgent consideration to the issue of conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels, and requests the Conference on Disarmament, as it did last year, to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements.

This year, a new paragraph 3 has been added, which requests the Secretary-General, in the meantime, to seek the views of Member States and to submit a

report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

The sponsors express the hope that draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.28 will be adopted without objection.

Ms. Frøholm (Norway): I have the honour to take the floor to address draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. Norway welcomes the Programme of Action agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July. The next step must be to confirm the Programme of Action in the General Assembly and to launch the follow-up process so that commitments made in July can be quickly translated into action through concrete follow-up and implementation at the national, regional and global levels. We fully support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47, which was presented to the Committee this morning by Colombia, Japan and South Africa, and we compliment them on their work in preparing the text.

To be successful in our efforts, we need to mobilize Governments, civil society, the United Nations and its agencies, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. We welcome the Security Council's involvement and the decision to request a report by September 2002 on how the Council can help prevent and combat the illicit trade in small arms. We need an integrated and comprehensive approach to deal with the complex and multifaceted problems caused by the proliferation and misuse of these weapons. We must address all aspects of the small-arms problem and focus on the link between licit and illicit flows. A United Nations feasibility study on an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit arms should be undertaken as soon as possible, and governmental experts should be nominated in the course of this year.

We support the Franco-Swiss initiative on tracing and marking. We also want to work with interested Governments and non-governmental organizations to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation on brokering.

In our national efforts, we will give high priority to assisting affected countries and regions. A comprehensive and integrated approach must span arms control and human security and development. The demand for and misuse of small arms are clearly related to problems of poverty, underdevelopment, lack of security and injustice. We must address the root causes of conflict and violence and place small-arms action firmly in the context of comprehensive peace-building and human development.

We believe very firmly in the importance of security-sector reform for development, and in practical disarmament and small-arms measures, as part of the security-sector approach and in the wider perspective of human security and development.

We call on delegations also to support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.39, on consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures.

Finally, we call on all Governments to consider making contributions to the United Nations Development Programme trust fund for small-arms reductions.

Mr. Jakubowski (Poland): As this is the first time I have addressed the Committee this year, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. The Polish delegation is confident that you will bring to our deliberations your proven experience and wisdom on matters of disarmament and international security, and that you will continue to preside over our deliberations with balance and vision and will facilitate the successful completion of our tasks. As a Pole, I am particularly pleased to see in the Chair the representative of a nation with which we have been so closely linked for centuries. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

Let me reiterate Polish solidarity with the people and the Government of the United States. Poland shares in the grief and pain for those who lost their lives in the horrible terrorist attacks of 11 September.

In the light of those events, we have to take a fresh and careful look at each and every field, each and every niche, in the domain of disarmament. They are certainly related to our subject for today. The combination of a sick mind and conventional weapons can bring about destruction of massive proportions. I should like to offer just a few remarks, as we note the growing importance of multilateral activities, both regional and global, in the area of conventional arms control and disarmament. Over the course of several

years, there have been a number of promising developments.

We have associated ourselves with the statement of the European Union on small arms, so I wish to add only a few words.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has become one of the greatest challenges to international security in the twenty-first century. There is a clear link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and such threats as terrorism, trafficking in drugs and people, and organized crime. Poland has actively participated in work on the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We believe that the Programme of Action adopted in July at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, are interconnected. Therefore, we value the fact that this was reflected in the Programme of Action of the Conference.

It is worthy of note that growing attention is being paid to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). With the Review Conference of the Parties to be held in December this year, we have an opportunity to further strengthen the principle of reducing the human suffering that results from warfare. We welcome the progress on the preparatory work that has been made in Geneva under the leadership of Ambassador Luck of Australia. We now have a strong framework for a successful Review Conference. Poland attaches great importance to the Convention, and shares the view that it is a unique instrument in which legitimate military needs as well as humanitarian values and concerns can be and indeed are addressed simultaneously.

Strongly driven by humanitarian concern over the death and suffering caused by the worldwide landmine crisis, Poland is in favour of reducing the deadly threat caused by mines other than anti-personnel mines. Hence, we believe that the establishment of minimum detectability standards for such mines and the imposition of the requirement that these mines, when delivered remotely, must be fitted with self-destruct, self-neutralization and self-deactivation features will fully serve the goals of the CCW Convention. The relevant technology is available. For that reason, Poland, with a number of other countries, joined in sponsoring the proposal in that regard put forward by the United States and Denmark.

With regard to the issue of explosive remnants of war, Poland supports the establishment of a group of governmental experts. We believe that the group will move swiftly towards a legal solution. We understand the importance of this problem — and for good reason. Unexploded remnants of war, left from the Second World War, are still present in my country. For more than 50 years, Poland has continued to clear its national territory, which has been contaminated by every possible kind of munition. Between 1945 and 1956, 14 million landmines and 58 million munitions, bombs and other explosives were detected and destroyed. Over the past 40 years, a further 36,000 anti-tank mines and 10,669 air bombs; more than 177,000 artillery shells and 4 million rounds of ammunition; and a number of sea mines, have been detected and destroyed. We have accumulated a great deal of experience, and we are now sharing it with others. Some 700 Polish soldiers have already been involved in humanitarian clearance as part of peacekeeping operations in several regions of the world.

In the course of the preparatory process for the Review Conference, significant attention has been paid to the Swiss proposal regarding small-calibre ammunition, which is aimed at reinforcing the Hague Declaration of 1899. I welcome the apparent resolve to further strengthen the humanitarian dimension of the CCW and to continue, at an expert level, work focused on the wounding potential of small-arms ammunition. I hope that this work will enable us to arrive at an agreed position and, subsequently, to bring the issue to the attention of the group of governmental experts.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would like to say that, on Monday, 29 October, in the afternoon, we will continue with phase II. We have also planned two meetings for Tuesday, 30 October. There are no speakers on the list for the afternoon meeting on Tuesday, 30 October. We will therefore continue with our work on phase II on Monday, and complete it on Tuesday morning. It is my intention to proceed to the third phase of the work of

the Committee on Tuesday, 30 October, in the afternoon, instead of on 31 October as originally scheduled.

Document A/C.1/56/CRP.3 has been distributed to all delegations in order to facilitate the third phase of our work. As the Committee may recall, that Chairman's paper arranges all draft resolutions and decisions in appropriate clusters. I ask delegations to bear that paper in mind as a useful tool as we proceed to phase III; it is a yardstick by which we can organize our work efficiently.

I would also like to state that, in the process of grouping the various draft resolutions, I have applied the most logical and practical criteria available, at the same time making efforts to group, to the extent possible, all draft decisions and draft resolutions according to related subject matter. Again, I stress that the main reason for preparing that paper was to enable the Committee to carry out its work in phase III in the most effective way.

As I mentioned at the previous meeting of the Committee, it is my intention, with the cooperation of members, and on the basis of past practice and precedents, to move from one cluster to another upon the completion of action on each cluster. Nevertheless, I hope that, while following this procedure and moving from one cluster to another, the Committee will maintain the desired degree of flexibility.

I also want to draw the attention of the Committee to something that is repeated at every General Assembly session but is useful to recall: during this third phase — the decision-making stage — delegations will first have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions with regard to any particular cluster. That will happen as we start phase III: members will have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions relating to any of the clusters. Subsequently, however, delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than explanations of vote on the draft resolutions listed in a particular cluster, will have an opportunity to do so. They will be able to make general statements or comments on a given cluster — except, of course, in the case of explanations of vote.

Delegations will be able to explain their vote or position on a given draft resolution before or after a decision is taken, according to their preference, if they wish to do so. In accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of a given draft resolution are not permitted to make statements in explanation of vote on that draft resolution. Sponsors are allowed to make only general statements on a draft at the beginning of the discussion of the particular cluster.

It is my intention to follow the procedure that I have just outlined — which should not come as a shock, because it is the usual practice that has always been followed in this Committee — when we start phase III, i.e. taking action on draft resolutions submitted under all agenda items.

In the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Committee and the Chair will proceed accordingly.

On Monday there will be one further meeting devoted to phase II. On Tuesday morning, we will convene the last meeting for phase II, and the third phase will begin on Tuesday afternoon.

At this point, I would like to announce that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday at 3 p.m. in this Room.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have become sponsors of the following draft resolutions: draft resolutions A/C.1/56/L.7 and L.10, Mongolia; L.15, Brazil; L.28, Belarus; L.34, Liberia; L.40, Mongolia; L.43, Monaco and Mongolia; L.45, Burundi, Ethiopia, Honduras, Kenya, Lebanon, Namibia, the Niger, Pakistan, the Philippines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Zambia; L.47, Bolivia, Ecuador, Georgia and Monaco; and L.50, Viet Nam.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.16

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
16th meeting
Monday, 29 October 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of Bolivia and Chile on the question of general and complete disarmament. The Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace reflects the excellent friendship among the countries of our subregion and sets out a forward-looking programme to strengthen ties among them. Our countries have also set up bilateral consultative machinery with a view to the adoption of further subregional and hemisphere-wide measures to build stability, peace and democracy in the zone.

Over the past year we have continued to strengthen the machinery for consultation and cooperation on ongoing security and defence issues, thus encouraging their continuing development. By the same token, on the regional level, the general framework of our relationship has been marked by progress towards the adoption of measures to build confidence and to consolidate cooperation and integration in this sphere. For instance, we have established a common mechanism for registering buyers and sellers of small arms and have set up joint demining activities and bilateral meetings of Ministers of Defence.

Here, the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile recognize that the increased incidence of violence is among the gravest problems affecting our societies, and are determined to develop new policies involving additional measures to combat that problem, both individually and through joint action. They have agreed to regulate more strictly access to and carrying of firearms, to bolster programmes of education for peace and tolerance, and to develop cooperation with the mass media in order to avoid the promotion and dissemination of a culture of violence.

Under that policy, MERCOSUR Governments decided during the past year to establish a group to study harmonizing our respective countries' legislation on firearms and ammunition, to intensify cooperation to better regulate trade in such items, and to promote coordinated action on this issue in international forums.

We are committed to supporting the full entry into force and the improvement of instruments and machinery on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This was reflected in our statement on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in which we also declared our commitment to do everything necessary to ensure the universality of the Treaty and

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01-60582 (E)

full compliance with it so that it can attain its ultimate objective: a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Our ongoing promotion of cooperation towards the exclusively safe and peaceful uses of nuclear energy was once again seen at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, when we said that the MERCOSUR countries, Bolivia and Chile believe that nuclear activities for peaceful purposes must be undertaken on the basis of transparency and in compliance with internationally acceptable norms of nuclear safety and of the physical protection of nuclear materials. We consider that the use of nuclear energy in our region must be intimately entwined with the adoption and implementation of appropriate security measures to bolster the trustworthiness and environmental friendliness of nuclear power. That would bring about greater acceptance among our peoples.

At the regional level, our commitment to the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons was reflected in the Declaration of Mendoza, which was signed on 5 September 1991 by Argentina, Brazil and Chile; Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay too have endorsed the Declaration. By that instrument, our countries are committed not to develop, stockpile or use chemical or biological arms, and to become original parties to the Convention on Chemical Weapons.

The countries of our subregion continue resolutely to make strides towards making MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile a zone free of landmines, and towards extending that zone throughout the western hemisphere. With the ratification of the Ottawa Convention by Chile and Uruguay this year, all six of our countries have now ratified that instrument. Moreover, a regional seminar on the destruction of anti-personnel landmines was held at Buenos Aires on 6 and 7 November 2000, organized by Argentina and Canada, and with the involvement of the Organization of American States (OAS). The seminar was a major step forward on the road towards the implementation of article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. We can say today that the countries of our region are complying with the deadlines for destruction set by the Convention, including the establishment of our own timetables in line with our own particular conditions.

We once again reaffirm our commitment to expanding and making systematic the information we provide to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and to setting up uniform methodology for reporting on military expenditures. In that vein, we reiterate our endorsement of the recommendations set out in the 2000 report (A/55/281) of the Group of Governmental Experts with respect to the functioning of the Register and its future development. We look forward to endorsement of the work undertaken by Argentina and Chile in the context of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on a standardized common methodology for the measurement of defence expenditures. We also note with particular interest the initiative taken by Chile and Peru towards the same end, and express the hope that this methodology can be used by other countries of the region. These unique commitments, together with the transparency that we offer the world in their implementation and the confidence created by our close defence-related ties, give us much authority to share our experiences with the international community.

In conclusion, we have only to reiterate our commitment to continue making further strides towards attaining the goals set by the declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, as a zone of peace, so that in the near future we can say with satisfaction that we have fully attained the goals we have set.

Mr. Bakhit (Sudan) (*spoke in French*): As Chairman of the African Group for the month of October, I have the honour of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.29, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa". Created in 1986 at the express request of the heads of State and Government of Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa has the mission of providing the African countries, at their request and in cooperation with the Organization for African Unity (OAU), working support for the initiatives that they take and for other efforts to promote peace, arms limitation and disarmament in the region. It coordinates regional activities undertaken in Africa within the framework of the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme.

As is clear from the report of the Secretary-General, the revitalization process of the Regional Centre, started in 1998, has led to an increase in

activities, which at the same time have become diversified in order to take into account the new challenges that the States of the continent must meet, in particular in the areas of promoting peace, arms limitation and disarmament. It is also clear that despite the growing importance of these activities, the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa is still experiencing serious financial difficulties. The voluntary contributions are not sufficient to cover its operational and administrative expenses.

Because of this situation, draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.29 has undergone changes in relation to the document adopted on this issue last year. Reaffirming the General Assembly's strong support for the revitalization of the Regional Centre, the draft resolution emphasizes the need to provide it with the necessary resources to enable it to strengthen its activities and carry out its programmes, while appealing once again to all States, as well as to international governmental and non-governmental organizations and the foundations, to make voluntary contributions in order to strengthen the programmes and activities of the Regional Centre and facilitate their implementation. It also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide it with the necessary support for better achievements and results.

Finally, it welcomes the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and appeals in particular to the Regional Centre, in cooperation with the OAU, regional and subregional organizations and the African States, to take steps to promote the consistent implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that this draft resolution will enjoy the broadest possible support in the First Committee, in view of the importance of this matter for Africa.

Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Since this is the first time in the course of our work that my delegation has made a statement, I am pleased to congratulate you warmly, Mr. Chairman, on your well-deserved election to lead the work of this Committee. My delegation very much appreciates the tact and skill with which you are conducting the discussions since the start of our work. We assure you of our continued support, and also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his preliminary remarks at the beginning of our work, which have enriched our discussion.

Like the delegations that spoke during the general debate, in which, unfortunately, we were unable to take part, I would like to reaffirm my country's strong condemnation of the base criminal acts of which the United States was victim on 11 September 2001, in which several thousand innocent people were suddenly torn away from their families.

Now I would like to turn to the subject under discussion, draft resolution A/56/C.1/L.2, on regional confidence-building measures and the work of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. I would like to thank my friend the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mr. Atoki Ileka, for his very able introduction of the draft resolution, of which my country is a sponsor.

We all understand the salutary effects of confidence-building measures in a given subregion or region in terms of maintaining a climate of peace and security, which are indispensable factors for peaceful development. Confidence-building measures make it possible to reduce tensions and suspicions, especially among neighbourly States, and to work together in order to find mutually beneficial solutions.

In Central Africa, the leaders of our subregion have well understood this and initiated and established a number of concrete measures by creating mechanisms for political and military consultation, such as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa which includes a Central African multinational force and an early warning mechanism for Central Africa.

We should also emphasize that periodic meetings take place between neighbouring countries of the subregion, either at the political level or at the level of experts, in particular at the level of officers of security forces, in order to develop strategies of coordinated struggle against such threats to security as large-scale banditry and illegal traffic in small arms. Nor should we fail to note the non-aggression pact among all States of the subregion.

All these actions can be attributed as much to the vision of the heads of States of Central Africa as to the

valuable support given by the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which coordinates peace and security efforts. That is why we would like to express our appreciation to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, of which the Standing Advisory Committee is a part, for its strong and steady support for the establishment of strategies for peace and security in Central Africa.

In conclusion, I appeal once again to the States Members of the United Nations to make additional contributions to the special fund in order to allow the Advisory Committee to establish and finance its programme of work, which is so vital to peace and security in Central Africa. The support of all delegations for draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.2 would be a step in that direction.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): It is my honour to present to this Committee, on behalf of the 116 sponsors, the well-known annual draft resolution on transparency in armaments, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40. I will refrain from reading the entire list of sponsors, given the time constraints, but it is already as long as last year's and we expect more countries to sponsor this year.

Transparency in armaments is one of the major confidence-building principles among States which enables the international community to be better informed about military matters and developments. Transparency in armaments thus diminishes misperceptions and helps to prevent information from getting distorted.

To increase transparency in conventional weapons, however, only instruments with limited scope of application are available. Some are limited to certain very specific types of conventional weapons; others apply only in certain regions. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Ottawa Convention, for example, deal with selected types of weapons, while the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe deals with a specific region. The Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions is an important example of a regional arrangement that addresses specific types of conventional weapons.

These regional initiatives and arrangements on conventional armaments underpin the important contribution that regional organizations can make to transparency in armaments, but we also have two important instruments that complement the regional initiatives and arrangements at the global level. They are the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms, which reports on national arms transfers and holdings on a voluntary basis, and the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures.

Both instruments have developed steadily over the years. Increased participation by States demonstrates the growing confidence that transparency can also help prevent the excessive accumulation of arms by encouraging self-restraint in military production and transfer of arms, help ease tensions and strengthen regional and international peace and security. We therefore believe that the international community should continue improving and further develop the Register, both in terms of participation and in terms of scope of reporting. The Group of Experts to be reconvened in 2003 will give us such an opportunity.

The growing confidence in the Register is evident from the upward trend in reporting: 109 Governments have submitted returns for the latest calendar year of 2000, with some late submissions still expected to come. This is by far the highest level of participation recorded for any year since the Register was established in 1992. The previous highest level was last year, for which 99 Governments submitted returns.

I would like to congratulate in particular those countries, which participated in the Register for the first time this year: Botswana, Nauru, Palau, Suriname, Togo, Tonga and Tuvalu. As a result of their submissions, the number of countries that have participated in the Register at least once now exceeds 155. I would like to encourage them to continue their participation in the coming years. Echoing the appeal made earlier by Belgium on behalf of the States members of the European Union, I would also urge those countries that have submitted a report only once or a few times to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency would significantly raise the level of participation and thereby the quality and significance of this confidence-building measure. Participation includes so-called nil reports, which confirm that no transfers took place in the calendar year.

As a practical point, I would also remind Governments that have not already done so to provide information regarding their national point of contact to

the Secretariat in order to facilitate the timely submission of data and its accurate compilation by the Secretariat. This is also an appropriate moment once again to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat and the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their efforts in compiling and publishing the Register and assisting Member States with the submission of their reporting.

The Register has thus become reasonably well established. It has established a de facto norm of transparency in armaments, which Governments must take into account. It provides a significant amount of information officially reported by Governments, which otherwise would not have been available. This information provides a legitimate basis for regional and interregional consultations between Governments. The Register also performs an important role in public information, promoting accountability of political and military leaderships. The Register also has stimulated many Governments to improve their national systems for monitoring and controlling arms transfers. Finally, the Register has set an example for new regional initiatives, such as the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, to which I referred earlier in my statement.

Next year will complete 10 years of the operation of the Register and I believe it would be appropriate to mark the tenth anniversary during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Notwithstanding all the good news this year on the United Nations Register, we are still far from true universal participation in the instrument. In this context, it is important to note that the concept of transparency in armaments is certainly not restricted to conventional armaments. The desirability of transparency applies as much to weapons of mass destruction as it does to conventional weapons. Multilateral treaties related to weapons of mass destruction are there and provide for their own mechanisms to ensure transparency in weapons of mass destruction.

We are encouraged by the constructive dialogue that we have developed with those countries that are not yet in a position to participate in the Register and cannot yet give their support to this draft resolution. We will continue to work with them. Let me once again assure the Committee that the Netherlands will continue to work actively to promote greater transparency in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

I therefore sincerely hope that this Committee will continue to give widespread support to the draft resolution on transparency in armaments in general, and to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in particular, by adopting the draft resolution with as near a consensus as possible.

Mr. Heinsberg (Germany): As I am taking the floor for the first time this session, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship. My delegation is delighted to see you in the chair, and, through you, we would like to congratulate your country, the Republic of Hungary. I assure you of the full support of my delegation as you guide our work to what I hope will be a successful conclusion.

I have the pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.42, presented by Germany and Romania — my Romanian colleague will speak later — entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

Let me begin with some general remarks on the operational side of this draft resolution, which has close links with the draft resolution introduced by the Netherlands on the Register of Conventional Arms under the common umbrella title, "Transparency in armaments", which Ambassador Sanders has just introduced, and which Germany fully supports.

Significant progress was recorded this year with regard to the level of participation by Governments in the two global arms transparency instruments maintained and operated by the United Nations Secretariat: the Register of Conventional Arms and the standardized instrument for reporting of military expenditures, which were based on draft resolutions submitted, respectively, by the Netherlands and by Germany and Romania. Encouragingly, the number of new participants in the two arms transparency instruments continues to grow, and has registered a significant increase over the past two years.

As a result of a promising increase, a record number of submissions by Governments have been recorded for the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting of military expenditures. This year the Secretariat received submissions from 60 Governments, as compared with only 34 last year. I

would like to mention the Governments of Kiribati, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, San Marino and Vanuatu, which participated in the United Nations military expenditure instrument for the first time, making a submission in 2001. The standardized reporting format covers expenditure on personnel; operations and maintenance; procurement and construction; and research and development.

So far more than 90 Governments have participated in the military expenditure instrument at least once. These Governments together are responsible for about 80 per cent of global military expenditure.

A sustained effort is being made by the Secretariat to increase familiarity with the procedures of these instruments, with a view to encouraging greater and more consistent participation. A series of regional and subregional workshops, with the assistance of interested Governments, is also planned for later this year and for early 2002 for Latin America and western and southern Africa, together with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Netherlands and Canada. These efforts will help to enhance and sustain the progress of global transparency instruments towards fulfilling their respective confidence-building and arms-restraint objectives.

This year's version of the draft resolution presented biennially by Germany and Romania is a follow-up to the 1999 version. It has been slightly reshaped in both the preambular and operative parts in the interests of better readability and easier understanding of the logical flow of statements and recommendations. It now includes a new preambular paragraph on its political importance with regard to conflict prevention. It also encourages Member States that have no information to provide to submit nil returns. Participation could thereby be further increased towards the goal of universalization.

I appeal to all countries that have not yet participated to join the instrument by submitting information this year. I also appeal to those that have participated only once, or just a few times, to participate on a consistent basis. Consistency alone will significantly raise the level of participation each year.

With regard to two important administrative details, the Secretariat has asked me to convey to you, Mr. Chairman, two points. First, in order to facilitate the timely submission of data and its compilation by the Secretariat, participating Governments are requested to provide information to the Secretariat on their national point of contact. Secondly, to avoid errors and expedite the compilation of data, participating Governments are also requested, where possible, to make their annual submission by electronic means, in addition to the normal practice of sending or faxing their data in hard copy.

I take this opportunity to thank all those delegations which have actively contributed to the further development of our draft resolution during the past three weeks. Finally, I thank those nations which have for the first time sponsored our draft resolution this year and thereby inscribed themselves on the already impressive list of sponsors to date: Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Iceland, Lesotho, Mali, Nicaragua, the Niger, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Thailand, Tonga and Ukraine.

I express the hope that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania): It is a pleasure for me to see you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over this important Committee of the General Assembly. You have our full support and cooperation.

The representative of Germany, Ambassador Volker Heinsberg, to whom I express my deep gratitude, has just ably and convincingly introduced draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.42, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

As a traditional co-author of the draft resolution on this subject, Romania attaches great importance to this issue and further believes that increasing transparency in the military field will enable us to achieve increased confidence among the Members of the United Nations.

Recent experience in various regions of the world, including in South-eastern Europe, make clear the significance of the confidence-building process as an important and essential prerequisite for the building and maintenance of regional and international peace and stability.

We believe that a better flow of objective military information would be one way of strengthening the confidence-building process. Furthermore, such a flow would ease regional and international tensions as well

as prevent any misunderstandings or miscalculations that might lead to irreversible changes, which, unfortunately, could create precedents.

The Romanian Government reaffirms its conviction that the implementation of the United Nations standardized reporting system would be a step towards reducing tensions regionally and worldwide. Increased transparency in the area of military budgets and increased openness in military affairs would enhance confidence among the States Members of the United Nations, thereby providing an opportunity to reduce the risk of military confrontation.

We are pleased to underline the fact that, in the last two years, an increasing number of Member States have provided information to be included in the standardized reporting system.

I should like to thank the German delegation for its excellent work on this question and all sponsors of the draft resolution for their support. The Romanian delegation joins Ambassador Heinsberg's appeal for consensus.

Finally, it is a well-known fact that Romania has on several occasions reiterated its commitment to promoting transparency and confidence-building, both globally and in a regional context. That is why my delegation co-sponsored the draft resolution just submitted to us by Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands on transparency in armaments, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40.

Mr. Fils-Aimé (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has endeavoured to avoid being caught up in the arms race. It was able to limit the number of local conflicts aggravated by cold-war competition by taking a responsible and independent attitude in favour of nuclear disarmament as well as disarmament in the area of conventional arms.

With the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Latin America and the Caribbean became one of the first inhabited regions to be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In the current disarmament context, we welcome the active participation of the Group's members in all forums and mechanisms aimed at total nuclear disarmament — a goal that must be achieved in order to safeguard humankind.

At the same time, we share the concerns of the large number of countries that are concerned about the lack of progress in general disarmament and in particular in the area of nuclear disarmament. We are also aware that the security problems we are facing have their own specific characteristics. We are still threatened by conflicts that often are fuelled by poverty and marginalization, and we are not totally isolated from global tensions.

From this perspective, our region, without ignoring the high priority that must be accorded to the process of disarmament and in particular nuclear disarmament, attaches great importance, inter alia, to negotiations on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which is has close links with its socio-economic problems and with its security.

The activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean reflect the preoccupations of our region and are focused on increasing awareness of the relationship between security and development.

We welcome the General Assembly's decision to revitalize the Regional Centre. Today — two years after that decision was taken — the Centre has relaunched its activities and it is working on a broad range of issues related to the concept of peace.

Given the consensus on this draft resolution, which has so many positive implications, my delegation is very pleased to submit draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.46 in its capacity as Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. We are confident that this draft will once again receive the support of the General Assembly.

With the Centre revitalized, the Department for Disarmament Affairs has made one of its units available to us. The Centre has the mandate, inter alia, to help Member States in their multilateral negotiations for disarmament; in their deliberations on the adoption of rules and agreements; and in the promotion of transparency in military matters and confidence-building measures — that is to say, it emphasizes the regional approach to disarmament in all its aspects.

We believe that this mandate is very appropriate and that the region will benefit enormously from it. We recognize the innovative initiatives launched by the Centre, on the one hand, by emphasizing the link

between development and agreements on nuclear disarmament, and, on the other, by helping to disseminate information among Member States of the region. All of this, of course, will contribute to increasing the number of countries acceding to disarmament agreements.

The draft resolution also encourages the Regional Centre to continue to provide support and assistance in all issues related to disarmament, including the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We believe that the Centre's programme will accurately reflect our positions and will make it possible for us not only to create a common concept of regional security but also to develop a common policy as regards global security and development problems.

Mr. Flores (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will be making reference to the introduction of the draft resolution on the new United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As my colleague from Haiti stated, the Regional Centre, based in Lima, is distinguished by the fact that it carries out its activities in the first inhabited region of the world to be free from nuclear weapons — a region with very specific security problems, in which conflicts are often exacerbated by poverty and marginalization. The revitalization of the Regional Centre has become a reality, and the results of the many different activities it carries out make this clear.

In less than three years of work, the Centre has brought together more than 500 diplomats, law-enforcement officials, members of Parliament and representatives of civil society businesspeople in a variety of seminars and working groups on disarmament issues. By the end of this year, more than 140 police and customs officers will have participated in joint information seminars organized in concert with the Organization of American States on regulations and models for imports, exports and arms in transit, and a variety of related processes.

During the first half of 2002, over 70 police and customs officers will be trained for fighting the illicit trade in weapons and munitions.

With respect to landmines, the Centre has observed and verified the elimination of over 300,000 landmines, giving greater credibility to disarmament initiatives in the region. With respect to nuclear weapons, the Centre's parliamentary information panel has provided parliaments in our region with useful information on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and verification systems, and advised on the Treaty's potential developments. The Centre has contributed in practical ways to the process of ratification in a number of countries in our region.

Finally, the Centre has focused on identifying opportunities for coordination with other regional and subregional organizations and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Organization of American States (OAS) to work on the issue of firearms. Four such agreements are now under discussion with other organizations. These new initiatives will provide the Centre with a better mechanism for complementing rather than duplicating activities carried out by other organizations. The Centre is clearly entering a new phase in the strengthening of peace, disarmament and the promotion of social and economic development in our region.

However, we still need support for the Centre's efforts from countries around our region, which can propose items for inclusion on the Centre's agenda and make voluntary contributions towards the Centre's programme of activities. The concern and active involvement of member country delegates in the elaboration of this draft resolution are a clear sign of the interest that the Centre's activities have awakened in the countries of our region. The draft resolution is the result of agreement among us all and demonstrates the firm commitment we all share in continuing to support the Centre and making it an effective tool for disarmament, peace and development in our region.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I have the pleasure of introducing to the Committee the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.37, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", on behalf of the following sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia.

The yearly introduction of this draft resolution by the group of sponsors proves, if proof were needed, the interest that the countries of the Mediterranean basin and Europe attach to making a haven for peace, security and cooperation of our region, where the virtues of the exchanges between peoples have most often and best been expressed since the beginning of history.

The countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region are convinced of their common destiny as a community of immense, complementary resources and are committed to a dialogue that continues to be strengthened by an increasing number of joint initiatives to promote a coherent, interdependent whole.

The Barcelona Conference of 1995 was a demonstration of the new-found vision of the Euro-Mediterranean region as a whole. The Conference undeniably marked the recognition of the historically rich nature of Euro-Mediterranean relations and of the need to work together, using a global, concerted approach, to lay the foundations for a mutually advantageous partnership responding equitably to the needs of peoples in the region.

The various ministerial meetings held later and other forums for dialogue and consultation promoted the construction of the kind of Euro-Mediterranean region that we all desire: one that is stable and prosperous.

The draft resolution submitted for the consideration of the Committee is no different from resolution 55/38, adopted in the previous session of the Assembly. It continues to be based on factors aimed at strengthening security and cooperation in the Mediterranean.

With respect to the preamble, the draft resolution recalls the totality of initiatives taken by Mediterranean countries to strengthen peace, security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region and reaffirms the primary role of those countries in reaching that objective. It also reaffirms the responsibility of all States to contribute to the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region and their commitment to respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the draft resolution reaffirms the indivisible character of security in the Mediterranean and notes that peace negotiations in the Middle East should be of a comprehensive nature and represent an appropriate framework for the peaceful settlement of contentious issues in the region.

Operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution reaffirms the fundamental principles providing the foundation for the efforts made by Mediterranean countries to eliminate all causes of tension in the region and to find just, peaceful and lasting solutions to persistent problems in the region. Operative paragraph 4 reaffirms the conviction that the elimination of the economic and social disparities linked to inequality of development, as well as the promotion of mutual respect and greater understanding between cultures in the Mediterranean basin, will serve to reinforce peace, security and cooperation between countries in the region.

With respect to disarmament, operative paragraph 5 calls on regional States that have not yet done so to ratify all multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Operative paragraph 6 encourages all States to strengthen their confidence-building measures and promote openness and transparency.

As well, operative paragraph 7 encourages all Mediterranean States to further strengthen their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, organized crime, illicit arms transfers and drug production and trafficking, which pose a serious threat to peace, stability and the friendly relations between States, hinder international cooperation, and lead to the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to the destruction of the democratic foundations of a pluralist society.

As in past sessions, the sponsors are confident that the draft resolution will receive the valuable support of all members of the Committee and be adopted without a vote.

Organization of work

The Chairman: We have exhausted our list of speakers for today. As I mentioned last Friday, we will begin the third phase of our work — action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 64 to 84 — in the afternoon of Tuesday, 30 October, instead of on 31 October.

In this connection, I again draw the attention of the Committee to the Chairman's paper, document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, which is a clustering paper. As I stressed earlier, I intend — with the Committee's cooperation, clearly — to take each cluster successively, one after the other, beginning with the draft resolutions contained in cluster 1, entitled "Nuclear weapons".

At the same time, the Chair will take into consideration other factors as well in planning our work. I would very much like to be able to count on the Committee's cooperation and assistance to enable us to conclude the work of the Committee as early as possible. If a delegation or delegations have compelling reasons to request that consideration of a particular draft resolution in a cluster should be postponed, I would appreciate it if those concerned informed the secretariat as early as possible, in order to allow it and the Chair to plan our work accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee of additional sponsors of draft resolutions, as follows. A/C.1/56/L.7: Belarus, Bhutan, Sierra Leone and Togo. A/C.1/56/L.12: Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone. A/C.1/56/L.14, A/C.1/56/L.24 and A/C.1/56/L.34: Togo. A/C.1/56/L.30: Luxembourg. A/C.1/56/L.39: Niger. A/C.1/56/L.40: the Republic of Korea and Togo. A/C.1/56/L.42: Sierra Leone. A/C.1/56/L.43: the Republic of Korea and Togo. A/C.1/56/L.45: Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guinea and Nauru. A/C.1/56/L.47: Algeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iceland, Niger, the Republic of Korea, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom. A/C.1/56/L.50: India, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea and Tajikistan. A/C.1/56/L.51: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The Chairman: I remind the Committee that the meeting in the morning of next Tuesday, 30 October, will be the last of the second phase. There are 11 speakers on the list of speakers for that morning. I urge the sponsors of those draft resolutions that have not yet been introduced to kindly introduce them in the morning of Tuesday, 30 October.

I would also like to inform the Committee that it is my intention to adjourn the afternoon meeting on Wednesday, 31 October, at 5 p.m. so that the ceremony of presentation of the 2001 United Nations Disarmament Fellowship certificates can take place between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Mr. Dahan (France) (*spoke in French*): You have just told the Committee, Mr. Chairman, that tomorrow afternoon we will begin the third phase of our work — voting on draft resolutions. You have also said that, following tradition, you intend to proceed cluster by cluster. Has a list of the draft resolutions that we will vote on tomorrow afternoon been compiled? I believe that in previous years we had 24 hours' notice of the draft resolutions that we were to take action on. Is it possible to have a list of the draft resolutions on which you intend to have the Committee vote tomorrow?

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): The Committee has been given document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, in which all the draft resolutions and decisions under the heading "Nuclear weapons" are listed, from A/C.1/56/L.1 to A/C.1/56/L.48. We will proceed on that basis when we start the third phase of our work. Does that answer the question of the representative of France?

Mr. Dahan (France) (*spoke in French*): Coming from you, Mr. Chairman, that is, of course, by its nature, a satisfactory response. But, to be more precise, I wonder whether all the draft resolutions under that heading will be ready for a vote. That was the point of my question.

The Chairman (*spoke in French*): The Secretary of the Committee has just informed me that all draft resolutions are ready and available to delegations. All the draft resolutions have been introduced, and we will therefore have no difficulty in putting them to a vote.

Mr. Dahan (France) (*spoke in French*): You have fully answered my question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I support my French colleague in principle. In previous years we have had the opportunity to prepare very thoroughly for the vote on all draft resolutions. I would like to inform you officially, Mr. Chairman, that we intend to submit an amended draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.1 but not before tomorrow, and therefore we will not be ready to put that draft resolution to a vote tomorrow. I think we would be able to put it to a vote at the earliest 24 hours after the introduction of our amendment. Therefore, I would like to ask you, Mr. Chairman, to take this into account and not put draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.1 to a vote tomorrow.

The Chairman: This is one manifestation of a compelling reason why a delegation asks for postponement of action on a given draft resolution. We will certainly be heeding this request of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Noburu (Japan): The reason I ask for the floor is the same as that of the Russian delegation. We, the Japanese delegation, have proposed draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.35, entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons". We are now in the process of submitting A/C.1/56/L.35/Rev.1. We will do it either late tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. Therefore, we would also like to request at least 24 hours, and maybe more. Even though the vote on the first cluster may be over within a few days, we may wish to postpone the vote on our particular draft resolution until the end of this week or early next week.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): I apologize for taking up the Committee's time. My intervention regards document A/C.1/56/L.42. I would like to thank the Ambassador of Germany very much for his very kind remarks in introducing the draft resolution, of which we are proud to be a sponsor. I would also like to express thanks for his kind remark that this is the first time that Thailand is co-sponsoring this draft resolution. But, merely to set the record straight, we have always supported this draft resolution and have co-sponsored it in the past.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): As the French delegation requested earlier, my delegation would like to do what has been done in previous years. I think that in previous years the Secretariat presented a list of draft resolutions ready for action under Cluster 1. I believe that not only will the draft resolutions introduced by Japan and the Russian Federation not be ready for action tomorrow, but there are other draft resolutions under Cluster 1 that are not ready. If possible, perhaps the Secretariat could present us now with the list of draft resolutions that are ready for action tomorrow.

The Chairman: Let me say this. We have document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, which lists all the draft resolutions introduced under the heading of nuclear weapons. At the same time, we work in a moving context. The reason why I drew the attention of delegations to "compelling reasons" is to allow us to proceed while fully aware of the evolving situation. This is why I asked delegations to inform the Secretariat, as early as possible, if they have such compelling reasons, so that we can plan our work. What is happening today as we speak is precisely this scenario. We heard a statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation and we heard another statement made by the representative of Japan, explaining why those delegations wish to postpone discussion of certain draft resolutions. Unless we hear specific requests for postponement, the Secretariat is confined to the list we have in document A/C.1/56/CRP.3.

So, unless any delegation wishes to let us know of difficulties or other compelling reasons for postponement, we will proceed according to document A/C.1/56/CRP.3. But I have mentioned more than once that the Chair will be as flexible as possible because we are all interested in a happy conclusion of our work. Therefore, I ask all the delegations again that might be interested in this kind of postponement to let us know precisely what draft resolutions they have in mind, and we will certainly act in accordance with the full understanding of a given situation.

Mr. Bakhit (Sudan): The African Group is still discussing and consulting on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.9, "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty". Taking this information into account, I will appreciate it if the Secretariat will also take note of that and give us some time to finish our consultations with interested delegations.

The Chairman: We will certainly take into account the request of the representative of the Sudan, and we will proceed accordingly. This is very important precisely because we are going to proceed to the third phase and we have to know how we can go ahead, on the basis of document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, with

the departures that might be necessary as we proceed to actions to be taken on all the draft resolutions.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): With regard to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.25, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", my delegation is still conducting consultations with other delegations, so the draft resolution will not be ready for action tomorrow.

The Chairman: We heard four delegations asking for specific exceptions that will be granted by the Chair, but I would like again to draw delegates' attention to A/C.1/56/CRP.3, which is the yardstick according to which we will be proceeding in phase III.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): We do not have any draft resolutions to be introduced or put into action, but, Mr. Chairman, you have referred to the cluster on nuclear weapons. Is it your intention, if time allows, to proceed to the clusters following the nuclear weapons one? I think that question is perhaps still in the air.

The Chairman: As I said earlier, we will try to spare as much time as possible for our work, so if we exhaust a given realm of possibilities, obviously bearing in mind eventual postponements, we will proceed to the next cluster. We will not stop. We will not disperse. We will try to utilize our time as efficiently as possible, and when the time is ripe, we will get back to those draft resolutions that were subject to postponement.

Mr. Borrie (New Zealand): Mr. Chairman, similarly to those who have already spoken, my delegation would beg your indulgence, for we need further time to consult on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) decision that is contained in A/C.1/56/L.10. We will not be a position for a decision tomorrow.

Mr. Vassallo (Malta): Mr. Chairman, in view of the interventions of a number of delegations this evening, I wonder if you would consider reverting to a practice of the First Committee whereby the Secretariat would, during the third stage of our discussions, publish a daily list of those draft resolutions that are ready to be taken up. We understand very clearly that you would like to practice discipline and stick to Conference Paper 3. Nevertheless, as difficult as it is for you to deal with a moving situation, it is rather difficult for us to have instructions on all draft resolutions at every moment, especially if we are going to be moving between one cluster and another. Again, just like my colleague, I would beg your indulgence on this matter.

The Chairman: After listening to a number of statements from delegations, what we can do at this point in time is to read out those draft resolutions that will come up for action tomorrow afternoon. The Secretary of the Committee will now read out the document symbols of those draft resolutions upon which we are ready to take action.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): This afternoon the Secretariat tried to reach the sponsors of the draft resolutions listed in clusters 1 and 2. We have been able to ascertain that the following draft resolutions are ready for action tomorrow: A/C.1/56/L.5, L.12, L.13, L.14, L.17, L.26, L.31, L.45 and L.48 in cluster 1. In cluster 2: A/C.1.56/L.32, L.33 and L.7.

The Chairman: The last three documents, those related to cluster 2 on other weapons of mass destruction are obviously subject to the evolution of discussions in cluster 1. Basically, we are talking here about cluster 1 — nuclear weapons — and then, time permitting, we might proceed further.

Again, let me remind members of the Committee that the last meeting of the second phase will be held tomorrow morning, Tuesday, 30 October, at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 4.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.17

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
17th meeting
Tuesday, 30 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Acting Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the approved programme of work and timetable, this morning the First Committee will conclude the second stage of its work.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation is pleased to introduce a draft resolution under agenda item 75 (f), contained in document A/C.1/56/L.50 and entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", on behalf of the following sponsors: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, and my own country, Nepal.

The first preambular paragraph recalls resolutions 42/39 D of 30 November 1987 and 44/117 F of 15 December 1989. By the fifth preambular paragraph the General Assembly would express its appreciation to the Regional Centre for organizing the annual disarmament meeting at Kathmandu, the regional disarmament meeting in New Zealand and the Conference on Disarmament Issues, held in Japan.

In its operative paragraphs the General Assembly would reaffirm its strong support for the further strengthening of the Regional Centre and underline the importance of the Kathmandu process as a powerful vehicle for the development of the practice of region-wide security and disarmament dialogue. Similarly, the General Assembly would reiterate its appeal to Member States, as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to the Centre.

In operative paragraph 6, the General Assembly, having taken into consideration the preparations made by the host country pertaining to the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu, would urge the Secretary-General to ensure the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu within six months of the date of signature of the host country agreement and to enable the Centre to function effectively.

My delegation and the other sponsors of the draft resolution sincerely hope that it will be adopted by consensus, as has been the practice in previous years.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I wish to introduce five draft resolutions and one draft

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01-60879 (E)

decision under agenda items 66, 74, 75 and 84. Given their number, I would appreciate your indulgence, Sir, and that of fellow delegations, for the length of my statement.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.18, entitled "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament", underlines the importance of all regional centres as mechanisms to inform, educate and generate public understanding and support in the field of arms control and disarmament. The draft resolution supports the activities of the three regional centres in Nepal, Peru and Togo, and emphasizes their valuable contribution towards changing basic attitudes to peace and security. The draft resolution also requests Member States in each of these regions, as well as those in a position to do so, and intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to the three regional centres so as to enable them to fulfil their role and to enhance their programmes of activities. It is the hope of the sponsors that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

The second draft resolution, document A/C.1/56/L.19, concerns the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). Members of the Non-Aligned Movement and a large majority of other members of the international community continue to believe that the convening of an SSOD-IV would offer an opportunity to review, from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation, the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament, and to mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and of the control and reduction of conventional weapons. The Non-Aligned Movement continues to believe that a special session should review the state of affairs in the entire field of disarmament and arms control in the post-cold-war era. The Movement remains concerned at the lack of progress in this regard, despite renewed attempts to establish another mechanism through which consensus on the objectives, agenda and timing of such a special session could be reached.

As was the case with the resolution adopted without a vote at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, this year's draft resolution calls for further steps that would lead to the convening of the fourth special session with the participation of all Member States, subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda. The sponsors of the draft resolution continue to believe that agreement to convene a special session could be facilitated through continued consultations by the Secretary-General.

The only substantive change to the resolution adopted at the fifty-fifth session is the inclusion of a new preambular paragraph noting the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which heads of State and Government resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. The sponsors wish the draft resolution to be again adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.20, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", underlines the importance of reallocating valuable resources released as a result of disarmament for development purposes, thereby reducing the gap between the developed and developing countries. This relationship has gained momentum and indeed become relevant against the backdrop of the diversion of a large proportion of financial, material and technological resources to armaments, which has placed a heavy burden on the economies of many States, especially developing countries. The stark contrast between expenditures for armaments and the paucity of aid for socio-economic progress is also self-evident.

The draft resolution acknowledges the actions taken in the context of the Final Document adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, and calls upon the high-level Steering Group on Disarmament and Development to strengthen and enhance its programme of activities, in accordance with the mandate adopted at that Conference. It also urges the international community to devote part of the resources made available through the implementation of disarmament and arms limitations agreements to socio-economic development. The draft resolution continues to request the Secretary-General to take action on the implementation of the action programme adopted at the International Conference. The sponsors trust that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

The draft resolution entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", is contained in document A/C.1/56/L.21. Its fundamental objective is to ensure compliance with the relevant environmental norms when negotiating and implementing treaties and agreements related to disarmament. The international community has long been aware of the detrimental consequences of uncontrolled radioactive sources and the risk associated with military activities involving nuclear materials. The dismantling of certain categories of weapons requires techniques and methods that will sustain and augment the prevailing environmental standards. While the draft resolution does not make any reference to specific disarmament agreements, it nonetheless calls on States to take fully into account the relevant environmental norms when negotiating arms control and disarmament treaties and agreements. It also calls for the application of the advances made in science and technology to enhance security and facilitate disarmament without adverse impact on the environment or to its effective contribution to the attainment of sustainable development. We remain hopeful that the draft resolution will be adopted with the widest possible support.

The draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace", in document A/C.1/56/L.22, builds upon the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, circulated as document A/56/29. In this regard, it reiterates the importance of the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee in support of the development of a mutual, beneficial dialogue to advance peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. To this end, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee is again requested to continue informal consultations and to report through the Committee to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. The NAM member States expect that this draft resolution will again be adopted with the support of a large majority of Member States.

Finally, the draft decision, document A/C.1/56/L.23, calls for the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the item "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security".

Mr. Westdal (Canada): I formally present draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.30, entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification". The following delegations have joined my own in sponsoring this draft resolution: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

This draft resolution is identical to resolution 54/46 of 1 December 1999, adopted without a vote by this Committee and by the General Assembly. The draft resolution, which Canada has introduced biennially for 16 years, provides an opportunity for us to reaffirm unanimously the centrality of verification in our disarmament and non-proliferation endeavours. Effective verification measures provide the essential assurance that States require that others will honour their obligations. By building confidence in arms limitation and disarmament agreements, verification contributes to a virtuous circle, buttressing the integrity of those agreements by encouraging transparency, respect for obligations and full implementation. Verification bolsters both bilateral and multilateral agreements, enhancing regional as well as global security. A variety of methods, from national technical means to international scientific monitoring, declarations, visits and investigations, all contribute to the verification of such agreements. Some of these methods can also be applied to agreements outside the non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament realm.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has recently demonstrated the worldwide acceptability and feasibility of a stringent verification regime involving both reporting and on-site verification by international inspectors. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) helps to verify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the conclusion of additional protocols strengthens the NPT. Verification of the Treaty is also achieved through the review process and will be furthered by reporting by all States on the implementation of article VI, as agreed in

the Final Document of the May 2000 NPT Review Conference. Regrettably, efforts to achieve a compliance regime for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention have not yet borne fruit.

The 16 verification principles drawn up by the Disarmament Commission in 1988 and further elaborated by the United Nations study on verification in all its aspects, document A/50/377 of 22 September 1995, remain as valid today as when they were written, and perhaps more relevant than ever as we are reminded daily of the threat of weapons of mass destruction. I recommend those principles to all present.

Mr. Sood (India): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament", as contained in document A/C.1/56/L.13. The draft resolution is sponsored by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Viet Nam, Zambia and my own country.

The draft resolution addresses an issue of fundamental importance to the international community, and particularly the developing world. Advances in the field of science and technology offer immense possibilities for development. However, there is a need to recognize that several of these advances are of dual use and could have both civilian and military applications. Access to scientific and technological advances for developmental purposes is a priority for developing countries for achieving economic growth and to participate actively in global trade.

At the same time, several countries in the developing world have had to pay a cost in terms of development because of the persistence of discriminatory control regimes. These regimes are in effect exclusive groupings of countries that limit the exchange of such technologies to exchanges between themselves, while denying access to others. The regimes are often non-economic barriers to normal trade, and go against the generally accepted principles of global economic relations. Exclusive export control policies were initiated to address proliferation concerns at a time when there were no global agreements that comprehensively addressed this issue. Questions have arisen as to whether such exclusive arrangements, with limited membership, and ostensibly for a temporary period, have been truly effective in achieving their stated purpose of strengthening the international non-proliferation regime, especially as regards scientific and technological applications connected with advanced weapons and weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the first multilateral disarmament agreement of a universal character, eliminating a complete class of weapons of mass destruction, offered an opportunity to put in place a multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory legal mechanism that would simultaneously address proliferation concerns emanating from unregulated transfers and promote the economic development of States parties. The CWC placed an obligation on States parties to review their existing national regulations in the field of trade in chemicals in order to render them consistent with the object and purpose of that Convention. However, the persistence of certain ad hoc control regimes, creating a dual category of States parties to the CWC, stresses the need for early implementation of all the provisions of the Convention.

The recent setback to negotiations for an effective protocol to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) of 1972 has unfortunately deprived the States parties of an opportunity to put in place an effective system of regulation of transfers of agents, toxins, equipment and technologies relevant to the Convention, while avoiding measures that hamper the economic development of States parties.

The lack of a genuinely non-discriminatory universal agreement regarding nuclear weapons has also reduced the effectiveness of non-proliferation efforts in the nuclear field. Nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects cannot be divorced from the need for measures that promote nuclear disarmament and the progressive elimination of nuclear weapons. Absence of a disarmament benchmark renders nuclear non-proliferation difficult not only to implement, but also to measure.

India has consistently maintained that proliferation concerns regarding materials and technologies related to advanced weapons systems,

weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory agreements which are transparent and open to universal participation. The reflection of this principle in multilateral disarmament agreements would not only improve their effectiveness, but also create an added impetus for their universality.

With a view to carrying forward the consideration by the international community of the issues at hand, India, along with the co-sponsors, commends the draft resolution to the Committee for adoption. We hope that it will receive the support of a large number of delegations.

Mr. Myint (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.44/Rev.1, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Panama, the Philippines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Swaziland, Thailand, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own delegation.

We have put forward what has become our traditional draft resolution since 1995. Although it is not a formal Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) draft, it was born out of the Declaration of the Non-Aligned summit held in Cartagena in 1995. In fact, many NAM members are sponsors of this draft resolution. Since 1999, all Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have been sponsors.

In its operative paragraphs, the draft resolution inter alia recognizes that there is a genuine need to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies to minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination; reiterates its call upon the nuclear-weapon States to undertake the step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and to carry out effective nuclear disarmament measures with a view to the total elimination of these weapons; underlines the importance of applying the principle of irreversibility to the process of nuclear disarmament, nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures; welcomes the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the reaffirmation by the States parties that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, and calls for the full and effective implementation of the steps set out in the Final Document; calls for the conclusion of an international legal instrument or instruments on adequate security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States; expresses its regret that the Conference on Disarmament was unable to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament at its 2001 session, as called for in General Assembly resolution 55/33 T; reiterates its call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament early in 2002 and to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons; and calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

Those are some of the elements in our draft resolution. Its main thrust is the proposal for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament, leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the achievement of the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. I should like to ask, through you, Sir, that members of the Committee support the draft resolution, as they did our draft resolution last year.

Mr. Heinsberg (Germany): I have the honour to introduce under agenda item 74 (h), on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.39, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures". I have pleasure in announcing that in addition to the sponsors listed in the document the following countries are also sponsoring the draft resolution: Albania, Chile, Eritrea, Guinea, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Mozambique, Niger, Panama, Uruguay and Zambia. My delegation thanks all countries that have sponsored this year's draft resolution and extends a warm welcome to the countries that have signed up for co-sponsorship for the first time this year. The ever-growing number of sponsors bears testimony to the fact that the subject of

the draft resolution — practical disarmament measures — enjoys global support comprising all regional groups in this house.

Practical disarmament measures remain an important item on the United Nations agenda. The easy availability of large numbers of cheap and ready to use weapons, illicitly traded or manufactured, is widely seen as adding to the intensity and duration of ongoing armed conflicts, as well as to the many risks of future incidents of violence. Existing arms control measures do not cover the case of light weapons being used as primary assault tools of combat in ongoing conflicts or current incidents of violence. Thus the concept of practical disarmament measures, as developed in the Agenda for Peace and also addressed in the Millennium Declaration, tries to fill a gap in the disarmament agenda.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July this year, must be seen as a further cornerstone in the attempt to contribute to the cause of disarmament in much the same areas as practical disarmament measures are applied. It should also be mentioned that the concept of practical disarmament measures has been included in the mandate of peacekeeping missions, most recently in the case of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). United Nations expertise in the field of practical disarmament measures has furthermore been rendered on an unofficial basis to the disarmament project in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Let me briefly comment on the few changes and additions made to the text of the draft resolution. While it follows in large part the wording of previous years, the additions to the second and third preambular paragraphs and the reference in the seventh preambular paragraph link the draft resolution to the Programme of Action of the United Nations small arms Conference. Furthermore, reference is made in the second and fourth preambular paragraphs to peacekeeping and peace-building, in view of the fact that practical disarmament measures make up an important element of United Nations activities in this field. Finally, the new operative paragraph 5 requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session a report on implementation, taking into consideration the activities of the Group of Interested States in this regard.

I take this opportunity to briefly call to the attention of representatives the activities of the Group of Interested States, which was established in March 1998, with more than 60 countries attending the first meeting. The Group has met 16 times so far and has become a forum and focal point for delegations to initiate and discuss selected projects in the field of disarmament, aptly supported by the services of the United Nations Secretariat. All projects have one thing in common: they must be practical and their scope must be well defined, and a solid cost-benefit relationship is a prerequisite. Projects so far have comprised fact-finding missions, workshops and arms collection projects, all of which aim at contributing to the goal of practical disarmament. It should be noted that the activities of the Group of Interested States are based on this resolution. The Group is open to all Member States wishing to contribute to the cause of practical disarmament, be it through advice, financial contributions or by requesting assistance in the field of practical disarmament.

Similar draft resolutions in the past have always been adopted by consensus. I trust that the draft this year will again be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation at this stage wishes to comment on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.51/Rev.1, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them".

The phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms and the excessive, destabilizing traffic in them has led to a great deal of discussion in recent years in debates on peace and security both in the United Nations and in regional and subregional organizations. Many parts of the world have already adopted specific measures to combat this phenomenon, reduce it and finally eliminate it. The adoption of moratoriums on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons by the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the States of East Africa, as well as the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position, show the will to put an end to the evil of illicit trafficking in small arms.

The Security Council has also adopted a number of resolutions to combat illegal trafficking in small

arms, including resolutions 1196 (1998) and 1209 (1998), adopted when my country was a member of the Security Council.

Today it is more a matter of effective action, a genuine, pragmatic commitment on the ground, rather than simple declarations of intent or rhetorical statements. Last July's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted a Programme of Action, section III of which lists specific measures to help States to put an end to this illicit trade. They include reinforcing capacities in fields such as the development of legislation and the tracing and marking of small arms, as well as their destruction. Paragraph 3 of that section also covers possible financial and technical assistance to States to help them to combat this illicit trade. My delegation hopes to see all these measures translated into action.

United Nations bodies and civil society organizations, which give a great deal of support to the fight against this illicit trade, also deserve financial support. We have in mind particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), whose resources should be increased to enhance its support for programmes of collection and destruction of small arms.

Yesterday afternoon there was a reference in the Committee, quite rightly, to the difficulties encountered by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. The Centre, which was set up to support and promote the efforts of African countries in the field of security and disarmament, unfortunately has very limited resources, given that its tasks and needs are enormous. Therefore, the Centre, which is extremely important for the continent, should be granted the necessary financial, human and material resources to help it finance its programmes for the collection and destruction of small arms.

In conclusion, I stress that assistance to States to prevent the illicit traffic in small arms should concern all regions, since no part of the world, especially the developing world, is spared this phenomenon. My delegation will support any draft resolution along those lines.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is once again introducing a draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", this year contained in document A/C.1/56/L.3.

The rapid development of information and telecommunication technologies has acquired today the character of a global technological revolution in the field of information, embracing all spheres of society, without any exception — politics, economics, public administration, finance, science, culture and, finally, international relations. Information resources are increasingly becoming one of the most valuable elements of both the national and global heritage.

At the same time, lately there has been an objective increase in the potential threat of the use of information technology achievements for purposes that are inconsistent with the goals of progress in science and technology, as well as with the objectives of maintaining international peace and stability and ensuring the observation of the principles of non-use of force or the threat of force, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for human rights and freedoms.

It is important to reflect on how to prevent the use of technologies intended for peaceful applications and dual-purpose technologies, including information and computer technologies, in order to wage information wars and conduct illegal activities, especially terrorist acts fraught with the most devastating consequences. The very recent tragic events in the United States have highlighted the need for the international community to search for ways and means to solve this problem and elaborate relevant preventive measures.

With Russia's direct involvement, the issue of international information security has for a number of years been in the focus of United Nations attention. The consensus adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions 53/70, 54/49 and 55/28 implies not only recognition by the countries of the world of the existence of this problem, but also a call for its further consideration in a multilateral format. That is the underlying reason for the initiative taken by the Russian Federation this year.

The draft resolution we are introducing this year is in line with previous resolutions on the subject; it is consistent with their non-confrontational nature and takes into account the views of many States. We see the possibility for further developing the idea of international information security on the basis of a consistent approach, expansion of the agenda and

geography of its discussion and an increasingly concrete nature of further resolutions serving the common interests of security and stability.

I wish to stress once again that Russia's draft resolution on international information security is not intended to impose any particular vision of this problem. Nor do we have any plans to control information and telecommunications systems, restrict the free flow of information or inhibit access to it. On the contrary, the draft resolution implies respect for all existing democratic standards applicable to this sphere. However, we have been mindful of concerns expressed by some of our colleagues when discussing the draft, and we have incorporated their suggestions in order to make more specific some of its provisions.

Drawing on the experience of a step-by-step solution of other major international security problems, the draft resolution this year requests the Secretary-General to conduct a study of threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them. We suggest that this be done with the assistance of governmental experts appointed by the Secretary-General on the basis of equitable geographic distribution and with the help of Member States in a position to render such assistance. In our view, that would contribute to a more substantive discussion at the expert level of the whole range of issues related to international information security. It would also lead to better understanding of the conceptual approaches and positions of the parties and, possibly, narrow their differences.

At the same time, the consultations on the draft resolution have revealed that a number of delegations believe that international information security, as a rather new and insufficiently explored concept, might require a kind of preliminary testing. Mindful of this and the budgetary implications, we propose at this stage to take a policy decision to set up a group of governmental experts to examine the issues related to international information security, postponing its practical implementation until 2004.

I encourage all delegations to support Russia's draft resolution, which I hope will, as with similar resolutions in previous years, be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): The speakers' list indicates that I am supposed to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.42, but that is not the case. I take the floor to speak on a draft resolution that we considered but did not present at this session. I should like to address some of the ideas contained therein that we have been developing on the subject of national legislation and regulations on the transfer of arms and other sensitive materials. We feel that effective control of these transfers is of great importance from the perspective of arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation, stability and security, and with a view to combating terrorism. Against this background, we have been working on the draft of a resolution dealing with this issue.

In the course of our consultations it became clear that we should take account of a number of related areas where consensus had been reached with great effort, a consensus that we certainly did not wish to undermine. We therefore felt that it would be better to avoid any misunderstanding in this fragile and sensitive debate. We decided not to press our point at this session, taking into account also the overall political context of our present meeting and the desire of everyone here to avoid unnecessary confrontation.

Notwithstanding these sensitivities, we were encouraged by many to pursue our original idea. We remain convinced that effective national legislation on the transfer of arms and other sensitive materials is of the utmost importance for the international community in general and for disarmament, non-proliferation and counter-terrorism in particular.

We also believe that countries that have effective legislation to this effect should inform others that are still in the process of developing such legislation. The Netherlands has contributed projects in this field and will continue to do so.

We think that the issue of arms transfers should also be addressed at the global level, and that nations should exchange information on this subject through the United Nations system, so that every country has immediate access and can draw important lessons from what other countries have developed in terms of national legislation and regulation. We will avoid any inappropriate linkage to areas where these ideas may seem to meet with sensitive considerations. At the same time, during our consultations we have detected a positive interest in devoting attention to this issue at the United Nations level.

Against this background, we will, in close consultation with a number of interested countries, continue our work on a resolution that will have a good

chance of meeting with consensus at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Aleryani (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): As I am taking the floor for the first time, I should like to congratulate the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee on their election.

Yemen was one of the first countries to adhere to the treaties and conventions on disarmament, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC). The foreign policy of Yemen is based solidly on the need to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in all their forms as a step to consolidating peace, cooperation and development in the Middle East and the world at large.

Yemen supports other countries in the Middle East in expressing concern that Israel is the only country that has not heeded the appeals of the international community to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and is the only country continuing to pose threats to peace and security not only in the Middle East, but also throughout the world. That is why we support the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.5, presented by Egypt, calling for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.25, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

My country shares the concerns expressed by most countries of the world that countries possessing stockpiles of nuclear weapons should respect their commitments under the protocols they have signed to reduce their stockpiles gradually. My country supports the views expressed by non-nuclear countries about the dangers of such weapons to mankind and the environment, and recognizes the need to guarantee that these weapons will not be used by countries that possess them.

Mr. Tóth (Hungary): This year a draft decision has been put forward on the issue of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The draft is contained in document A/C.1/56/L.11.

As a departure from earlier practice, the draft does not address substantial questions, but sets the stage procedurally for the forthcoming Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the BWC. It is my hope and expectation that the draft decision will receive the traditional consensus support.

In its first paragraph the draft decision requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the BWC to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences and the 1994 Special Conference, and to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be required for the Fifth Review Conference, which will be held from 19 November to 7 December this year.

Paragraph 2 of the draft decision asks for the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the item entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Though the draft decision, because of its procedural nature, does not bring to the surface the challenges posed to the international community by recent developments, those challenges are serious. The forthcoming Fifth Review Conference will provide the right setting — that is, the necessary time, discussion framework, structure and expertise — for addressing those challenges in a meaningful way and for trying to identify the path to be followed by the international community in the prevailing situation.

Any review conference, with its five-yearly ritual of stocktaking and action planning, in itself is a crucial event. Finding a common political denominator to interpret the past and project into the future within the time frame of a decade is not an easy task, even under normal circumstances. This time, due to the nature of the issues to be confronted, the Fifth Review Conference will have to penetrate much deeper into the past and the future than any of its predecessors.

Ten years ago, back in 1991, the Third Review Conference launched the process that was first to consider possible verification measures and later draft proposals to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. The negotiations on the compliance protocol undertaken since 1995 in the Ad Hoc Group came to an abrupt halt in August this year. The Fifth Review Conference will have not just to consider the work undertaken during the last decade, but to chart the course for future action that will determine the state of

the whole of the biological weapons prohibition regime for a much longer period than just the next five years. That time-scale altogether is close to a generation. The potential ramifications could extend even further into the future.

The other challenge is posed by the recent incidence of anthrax use. The nature of this challenge is independent of whether these acts are of domestic or international origin. The daily news forces us to live with the notion that the use of such weapons is becoming a de facto part of everyday life. Such a notion is slowly eroding all the prohibition layers, both politically and legally binding, contained in the consensus Final Declarations of all the previous Review Conferences and in the Biological Weapons Convention itself. Moreover, at no time in recent history has there been such a clear and real-time realization that the non-use norm was being violated, it being a legal norm that dates back three quarters of a century to the 1925 Geneva Protocol; the precursor of the legal norm, the 1899 Hague Convention, being more than a century old; and the moral conviction that the use of such weapons would be repugnant to the conscience of mankind being centuries old.

Action or lack of action will shape the future of the biological weapons prohibition regime far beyond the Fifth Review Conference. We will have to reconfirm at the Conference the importance that the international community attaches to the integrity of each and every prohibition norm. We will have to project appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, to strengthen the BWC. We will have to follow up steps agreed upon through action. We will have to turn all these efforts into sustainable action for the period between the Review Conferences. We must not accept the slow erosion of the norms that have served us for decades, if not longer. We must comprehend that in the light of political and public expectations we have no other viable choice but to overcome these challenges.

Ms. Quarless (Jamaica): As Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 2001 session, and on behalf of the co-sponsors, who are traditionally members of the expanded Bureau of the Commission, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.4, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission". The draft has been prepared in a manner similar to that of previous resolutions regarding the Disarmament Commission, with appropriate changes to reflect current circumstances. Allow me to point out these changes.

For the second year in a row the paragraphs dealing with the issue of the further rationalization of the Commission's work have not been included in the text, since the subject was not addressed during the 2001 substantive session. During the course of the last session the Commission continued to be seized of the two agenda items, both in their second year of consideration: ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Paragraph 5 of the draft therefore reflects the present agenda of the Commission.

As delegations will remember, in its resolution 55/35 C, the Assembly decided that Disarmament Commission sessions should be for a period not exceeding three weeks, in accordance with the 1998 decision on rationalization of the work of the Commission. The Commission's 2000 session had been reduced to two weeks on an exceptional basis, due to an unusually busy calendar that year. The 2001 substantive session, however, maintained its three full weeks in accordance with the decision, and operative paragraph 6 reaffirms that this practice will be maintained in 2002.

I will now say a few words on the organization of work of the Commission this year. The Chairpersons of the two Working Groups held 12 meetings each, during which delegations conducted meaningful exchange on complex and sensitive issues, made extensive oral presentations and submitted written comments on the Chairperson's first draft. Based on the contributions of member States, the Chairpersons revised their original text. These documents, though non-binding and submitted on the sole responsibility of the Chairpersons of the Working Groups, served as a basis — or framework — for the discussions. It was not an easy task to try to maintain optimum balance among the differing interests on the issues, which address the essential precepts and the range of perspectives on security. I am pleased to report that the Working Groups rose admirably to the challenge.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to both Chairpersons, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei of Ghana and Ms. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina, for their valiant work. I also wish to commend the delegations for their constructive approach to the work of the Commission.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and his staff, as well as the staff of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services for their professionalism and unswerving support in ensuring the efficient conduct of the Commission's work.

I believe that I speak on behalf of all delegations when I express guarded optimism as to the future success of the Commission's deliberations during its forthcoming session in 2002. I believe that the 2001 session has contributed to strengthening the foundation which allows for further consensus-building on the issues that will be before the Commission next year. I hope that draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.4 on the report of the Disarmament Commission will again enjoy the consensus support of the Committee, as similar draft resolutions have in previous years.

Mr. De Saram (Sri Lanka): I speak under agenda item 66. The report (A/56/29) of the General Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean is before us under that agenda item. I have the honour to address the Committee as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, whose purpose it is to determine how the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace might be implemented. It is by no means an easy responsibility.

The Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace was adopted by the General Assembly in 1971. The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean last reported to the General Assembly in 1999, two years ago, at the fifty-fourth session. The Committee in its 1999 report recorded that it had not found it possible to reach consensus on the manner of the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The General Assembly took note of the Committee's report, and expressed the conviction that the participation of all permanent members of the Security Council and of the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee was most important. It requested that consultations continue with the members of the Committee, with the permanent members of the Security Council, and with the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, with a view to resolving the difficulties encountered on the question of the implementation of the Declaration. The Assembly requested that the Chairman of the Committee should, through the Committee, report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session in 2001, this year.

There are a number of difficulties in the way of the implementation of the objectives of the Declaration, which consultations with permanent members of the Security Council, major maritime users of the Indian Ocean and other members of the Committee have not as yet been able to resolve. Yet, however difficult implementation of the objectives of the 1971 Declaration may be, I believe, as Chairman of the Committee, that, as the report of the Committee notes, the objectives of the Declaration should continue to be preserved by the General Assembly: as an ideal towards which all concerned with the Indian Ocean, and with the Indian Ocean region, should, through participation in the Ad Hoc Committee, continue to strive, towards those goals of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean and in the Indian Ocean region that all members of the Committee — indeed all Members of the United Nations — fully share.

Thus I hope that the First Committee will find it possible to propose to the General Assembly this year, as it did two years ago in 1999, that the General Assembly maintain the item "Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace" on its agenda; that the General Assembly request that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, notwithstanding the difficulties obviously in its way, should continue its endeavours to arrive at an appropriate consensus; and that a report should be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session.

Mr. Sastradivedja (Indonesia): Indonesia, as one of the sponsors, supports draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.44/Rev.1, introduced by the delegation of Myanmar. We have been supporting in its entirety since 1995 the process resulting in the current draft resolution, because of its relevance to the state of disarmament efforts today and its comprehensive nature in addressing nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and related matters, reflecting the conscience of Indonesia and other Non-Aligned Movement countries.

The main thrust of the draft resolution is a programme for a phased reduction of nuclear arsenals leading to their total elimination. The draft resolution identifies a number of measures which, when implemented, will make a significant contribution to lessening the nuclear nightmare and the multiple

danger of deaths arising from them. Its adoption by an overwhelming majority would facilitate the nuclear disarmament to which we are all firmly committed.

Furthermore, we are convinced that the convening at an early date of an international conference that would lead to the adoption of substantive measures of nuclear disarmament has become imperative. The current international situation demands no less.

I should also like to express Indonesia's full support for the statement by the delegation of South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in introducing five draft resolutions and one draft decision.

Indonesia is also concerned about the question of nuclear dangers, about which the Secretary-General has warned us, and which is included in the Millennium Declaration. In our view, these dangers can emanate from a vast array of sources, including nuclear weapons and nuclear reactors, spent fuel and other radioactive materials. Apart from dangers posed by technical malfunctioning and deliberate political and military decisions, the unpredictable consequences deriving from nuclear attack and nuclear terrorism cannot remain indefinitely in the realm of speculation. For these reasons, Indonesia fully endorses the Mexican draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.16, entitled "United Nations conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in the context of nuclear disarmament".

The Acting Chairman: We have heard all the speakers on the list for this meeting. Does any other representative wish to speak at this stage?

Mr. De Saram (Sri Lanka): Yesterday the Chairman said that this afternoon, if time permitted, he would perhaps take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.7, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". Since consultations about action on the draft resolution are still continuing, may I request that action on it be held off for a few more days? In the interests of having the draft resolution adopted by the Committee, I believe that you, Sir, could grant this request.

The Acting Chairman: There is no problem in granting that request.

The Committee has thus concluded the second phase of its work, namely, thematic discussion on item subjects as well as introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items.

I call on the Committee's Secretary.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I wish to inform members of the Committee of additional sponsors of draft resolutions as follows. A/C.1/56/L.12: Afghanistan, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Haiti, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Namibia, Nauru and Zambia. A/C.1/56/L.13: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Namibia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Zambia. A/C.1/56/L.14: Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Haiti, Madagascar, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Zambia. A/C.1/56/L.15: Ireland. A/C.1/56/L.24: Jamaica and Papua New Guinea. A/C.1/56/L.30: Malta. A/C.1/56/L.34: Jamaica. A/C.1/56/L.37: Albania, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A/C.1/56/L.40: Papua New Guinea. A/C.1/56/L.41: United States of America. A/C.1/56/L.45: Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and Qatar. A/C.1/56/L.47: Croatia, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and Mali.

Organization of work

The Acting Chairman: As the Committee has already been informed, in accordance with the Committee's decision, the First Committee will this afternoon begin the third phase of its work: action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 64 to 84. In this connection, I draw attention to the text of the Chairman's clustering paper, document A/C.1/56/CRP.3, which was made available for consideration last week.

In order to utilize the remaining time and facilities in an efficient and constructive manner, I would remind delegations that the Committee will proceed to take decisions on draft resolutions contained in informal working paper No. 1, which will be distributed shortly. I count on the full cooperation and assistance of the members of the Committee to enable the Chair to conclude the work of the Committee as scheduled on time.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.